

Legal Counsel

Your goal in choosing your board legal counsel should be to choose one that understands their role of assisting the board in managing, directing and protecting your school board. School board legal counsels are not all equal. Some law firms are specialized. Some education law firms specialize in just negotiations, special needs students or suspensions and expelling students. Some school board firms can handle all of the board's needs. Get a copy of your contract with your legal firms(s) to make sure you can contact them. Some school boards write a contract with legal counsel that only allows contact with the board president. If your contract does not specify one contact person, you are allowed to reach out to them to ask questions and get advice. There are numerous law firms that you could consider asking for assistance if the need arises. We discovered that our legal firm consultant always seemed to advise us in a way that protected and benefitted the staff and not the students so, we interviewed and hired a new firm. In searching for a new firm, logistics should not be a primary concern because your legal counsel does not need to be onsite often and most issues can be discussed using technology.

School board members are indemnified. Indemnification means that if the district, board or you are sued while in office for something you did, said or enacted as a board member, in your role as a school board member, you are insured. This means that your legal counsel is provided by the district insurance company at no cost to you. If you have any questions about this, please feel free to email your questions to NSBLC4ed@gmail.com

Memberships or attending educational meetings

At your first meeting of the year, called an organizational meeting, each district board votes to set aside funds for you to purchase memberships to education organizations and to attend meetings that aid you in the duties for your job. We feel strongly that these tax dollars are intended for the student's education and that if you chose to become a board member you should pay your own expenses for memberships. School board members are entitled by law to attend educational meetings and conferences with the money they set aside in board funds. The board may have a policy that specifies that the board must vote to agree with your spending on your chosen events. If the board does not allow a board member reimbursement for their choice of educational meetings or conferences the board member has the right to sue their board for discrimination. It is unwise for a board to limit reimbursement or payment for a board member's choice to attend meetings or conferences that they deem relevant for the successful conduct of the board members' service. Again, we advise that doing all you can do to learn how to be a productive board member should be your choice and if at all possible, paid for by your personal funds or by a sponsor.