

Overview

Public and private school districts depend on Steptoe & Johnson to help them navigate the unique issues that their administrators and educators face. Our K-12 Education Team has the knowledge and experience to help clients create an environment where both educators and students thrive.

Our team is experienced in helping clients with various personnel matters, such as employee discipline, grievances, and termination, as well as contract drafting and review, collective bargaining agreements, school construction and bidding, and FOIA requests. We have a proven track record of handling high-profile litigation cases, including administrative hearings and courtroom litigation, and providing defense for boards of education defending claims of alleged Title IX violations, special education due process violations, negligence, racial discrimination, and athletics-related matters. Additionally, our team is well equipped to advise clients on all academic affairs and student disciplinary matters.

The team also includes attorneys and professional staff who regularly work with boards of education on bonds and levies, construction projects, real estate transactions, governance, and environmental permitting. The firm acts as outside general counsel for boards of education and has a seat at the table when important decisions are made.

Representative Experience

- Represented boards of education in state and federal courts, before grievance boards, and for special education due process claims
- Performed U.S. EPA-required AHERA Asbestos Compliance Inspections and Management Plan updates
- Defended an Ohio public school district treasurer against charges of professional misconduct before the Ohio Board of Education
- Counseled a West Virginia County board of education on the construction of a secondary school in compliance with the West Virginia School Building Authority's policies and procedures
- Represented multiple school districts in various matters, including personal injuries, alleged abuse, property damage, wrongful discharge, discrimination, and negligence in both state and federal courts

- Defended educational institutions regarding sexual assault of students claiming Title IX violations
- Assisted school boards with the coordination of asbestos abatement projects in schools
- Obtained a defense jury verdict on behalf of a county school board accused of negligent supervision of students that resulted in a fight and serious injuries to students on school property
- Provided Indoor Air Quality Assessments for various contaminants including mold and bacteria as well chemical associated air contaminants
- Assisted in maintaining permit compliance for NPDES needs including maintaining the required data input to the WVDEP electronic submission system
- Reviewed, negotiated, and revised a multimillion-dollar guaranteed energy savings contract on behalf of the public board of education
- Assisted a West Virginia board of education in expanding its federally approved “area of disturbance” for the construction of a secondary school pursuant to FEMA requirements and in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act
- Counseled a West Virginia board of education on compliance with Section 428 of the Stafford Act for the construction of a secondary school with federal funding
- Represented a West Virginia County board of education in multiple real estate transactions, memorandums of understanding, and contract negotiations
- Provided legal opinions to a West Virginia County board of education on advertising and political restrictions
- Served as bond counsel to several county boards of education in connection with school bond elections and issuances, including the largest school bond issuance in West Virginia history
- Counseled and advised multiple school districts on responding to FOIA requests
- Defended a school district in a matter involving allegations of racial discrimination against a student by fellow students and district employees
- Provided safety training for maintenance and custodial staff as required by the West Virginia State Board of Education

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