



# Status of School Board Attorney Search

February 21, 2023



# Presentation Objectives

- ❖ Overview of Legal Services Provided
- ❖ Benefits of On-Site Attorney
- ❖ Similar District Hiring for School District Attorneys
- ❖ Advertising Process
- ❖ Application Process
- ❖ Next Steps



# Overview of Legal Services



## Overview of Legal Services

### ❖ **Reviews:**

- Approximately 5-50 internal account contracts a week; at the beginning of the school year, it can be up to 100 a week
- Approximately 20 district contracts a week
- Agreements, such as Memorandums Of Understanding, interlocal agreements, leases
- Reviews garnishments, payroll deduction, court orders which dictate payment to 3rd parties and IRS issues

### ❖ **Counsels on:**

- Public Record Requests *daily*
- Involuntary examinations (students)
- Disputes/resolution issues dealing with ESE students several times a week



## Overview of Legal Services, Continued

### ❖ **Responds to:**

- 1-3 subpoenas a month
- Communicates (~20 calls/week) with principals to interpret court Orders regarding divorce/custody concerns
- Daily communication with District administrators regarding urgent legal concerns
- Legislative and FLDOE changes and effects on the school district

### ❖ **Attends:**

- 3-5 IEP meetings a month
- Up to 3 bargaining-related meetings per month
- Quarterly citizen advisory council meetings
- Approximately 25 board-related meetings a year



## Overview of Legal Services, Continued

### ❖ **Operations:**

- Draft/Review Easements, leases, property sales or purchases
- Dispositions of real or personal property, acquisition or disposition of portables
- Reviews/writes contracts and Interlocal agreements
- Review surveys of land and construction sites.

### ❖ **Consults with:**

- HR - Office of Civil Rights, EEOC and ADA Compliance
- Risk Mgmt - Workers' Compensation, lawsuits, settlements, litigation

### ❖ **Other Services:**

- Draft or update Board Policy to meet statutory requirements
- Review/Facilitate revision of Code of Conduct, Employee Handbook and all procedural manuals



## Overview of Legal Services, Continued

- ❖ The School Board Attorney maintains relationships with the State court system in both Clay and Duval Counties
- ❖ Maintains relationship with the Office of State Attorney
- ❖ Maintain relationships with litigating attorneys in Clay and Duval counties
- ❖ Maintain relationships with Clay County officials in many areas (Commissioners, Health Department, Emergency Command, etc)



# Benefits of Full-Time Dedicated Attorney





- ❖ All District departments utilize the School Board attorney, daily, for legal counsel and advice on a large array of matters.
- ❖ Issues arise unexpectedly and must be addressed in an expeditious and efficient manner which requires an attorney to be available on demand.
- ❖ Having an attorney on campus provides all District administrators and School Board members immediate access to legal counsel.
- ❖ On-Site Attorney understands the intricate needs of the District.
- ❖ A full-time dedicated attorney has the best interests of the District in all decision-making processes



# Statewide Hiring of School District Attorneys



## School Board Attorneys in Similar Size Districts

- ❖ **Alachua County** - 2 full-time dedicated attorneys
- ❖ **St. Lucie County** - 1 full-time dedicated attorney
- ❖ **Escambia County** - 1 full-time dedicated attorney
- ❖ **St. Johns County** - Firm attorney - office is adjacent to campus for immediate access
- ❖ **Collier County** - 1 full-time dedicated attorney



# Advertising Process



## Means by which the District is advertising the open position of School Board Attorney?

- ❖ **Florida Bar** - online posting and Bar Journal posting
- ❖ **Florida School Board Attorney Association** - email blast
- ❖ **Florida Association of School Administrators** - one month posting
- ❖ **American Association of School Personnel Administrators** - one month posting
- ❖ **IHire-Legal** - one month posting



# Application Process



## **Human Resources is coordinating the application process as follows:**

- ❖ Screening of resumes to ensure job description requirements are met.
- ❖ Eligibility is determined based on resume review or conversation with prospective candidates.
- ❖ Phone calls to qualified candidates to inform them of process and tentative time frame for interviews.
- ❖ Inquire of prospective candidates willingness to relocate.



## Applicants

- ❖ To date, the District has received 14 applications (one in a foreign language)
- ❖ Applicants have a varied level of experience in law. No individuals have direct experience with School Law
- ❖ All individual applicants agree to be full-time dedicated to the School Board and be housed in Green Cove Springs
- ❖ Two of the applications are firms, one of which agrees to full-time dedicated School Board Attorney housed in Green Cove Springs and one who is available via phone or email to answer legal questions





# Next Steps



- ❖ Share qualified candidates' resumes with Board Members.
- ❖ Board Members select top five (or preferred number) of candidates for interviewing process.
- ❖ Determine date for interviews.
- ❖ Make determination of best candidate OR select top two or three for second interview.
- ❖ Upon selection, official offer for position will be awarded
- ❖ Upon acceptance, employment contract will be negotiated



Questions?