



DISTRICT GENERAL COUNSEL

BASIC FUNCTION

Under policy direction, plan, organize, direct and control the legal services activities and staff of the district; provide direct professional legal counsel and representation for the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education and administrative staff on District legal matters as Chief Legal Counsel; oversee litigation and administrative law hearings; supervise and evaluate the performance of assigned legal and other personnel.

REPRESENTATIVE DUTIES

The classification specification does not describe all duties performed by all incumbents within the class. This summary provides examples of typical tasks performed in this classification.

- Oversee the preparation and rendering of legal opinions for the Board of Education, the Superintendent and District administrative staff; provide legal advice in the drafting of legal documents, rules and regulations, resolutions, applications and other legal or quasi-legal papers upon request. “E”
- Oversee the preparation of litigation and/or administrative law hearings, including the preparation of pleadings, and trial and appellate briefs, negotiations between parties, the conduct of trials and hearings at the level of original jurisdiction or on appeal, and other court or hearing appearances to represent most effectively the interests of the District as such interests are interpreted by the Superintendent and/or Board of Education. “E”
- Provide technical legal expertise, information and assistance to the Board of Education and the Superintendent of Schools; assist in the formulation and development of policies, procedures and programs to assure legal compliance; advise the Board of Education and the Superintendent of unusual trends or problems and recommend appropriate corrective action. “E”
- Participate on the Superintendent’s Cabinet; engage and participate in districtwide budget, business and educational initiatives, programs and operations planning, providing unique insights and perspectives; collaborate, recommend and develop cross-functional team strategies designed to serve student, family, local constituent and District stakeholder needs. “E”
- Appear before federal, State and local courts and legislative bodies to present the District position on issues pending before those entities. “E”
- Attend and provide legal advice at regular meetings of the Board of Education and such other meetings as the Board of Education or Superintendent directs. “E”
- Plan, organize and implement long and short-term programs and activities of the district’s legal services division. “E”
- Assign outside counsel to handle litigation matters as necessary; monitor and review the work performed by outside counsel. “E”

- Provide legal assistance in the drafting of State legislation proposed by the District for presentation to the Oregon State Legislature; interpret the impact of legislation on the interests of the District as such legislation is being considered by the legislature. “E”
- Oversee the maintenance of files on policy action of the Board of Education and supervise periodic revision of the rules and regulations of the Board. “E”
- Direct the preparation and maintenance of a variety of legal, narrative and statistical reports, records and files related to assigned activities and personnel. “E”
- Develop policies and procedures to encourage effective and efficient management controls. “E”
- Develop and prepare the annual preliminary budget for the legal division; analyze and review budgetary and financial data; control and authorize expenditures in accordance with established limitations. “E”
- Demonstrate a commitment to the Portland Public Schools Equity Initiative by developing a thorough knowledge and application of the district Racial Educational Equity Policy, Equity in Public Purchasing and Contracting and other board policies; participate in staff development, in-services and trainings related to diversity, equity and inclusion in the workplace and in K – 12 education; model appropriate behaviors; develop, recommend and implement improvements to business and educational practices with awareness and understanding of their impact in a racially and culturally diverse community. “E”
- Facilitate meetings, workshops, seminars and in-services; represent the District in a variety of local community based organizations and coalitions to effect positive dialogue and relations in school legal matters; participate in and attend local, state and national organization meetings and conferences relating to school legal issues. “E”
- Supervise the performance of assigned personnel; interview, select, evaluate and train employees and recommend transfers, reassignment, termination and disciplinary actions. “E”
- Perform related duties as assigned.

Note: At the end of some of the duty statements there is an italicized “E”, which identifies essential duties required of the classification. This is strictly for use in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CLASS

The District General Counsel is the executive-level classification in the district legal series job family. This employee leads and oversees the legal activities and staff of the District, recognizing the unique challenges associated with the law in public agencies, large urban school districts and communities. The employee in this assignment is sensitive and responsive to diverse populations, cultures and ethnic groups and works collaboratively and efficiently in the conduct of investigations, preparation of pleadings and briefs, rendering of legal opinions and providing advice to appointed and elected District leaders.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Knowledge of:

State, federal and local laws, regulations and court decisions applicable to K-12 public schools.

Principles and practices of public administration, intergovernmental relations, and school business operations.

Methods and procedures required to provide legal services to an administration and governing body in a large urban public agency.

Current local, state and federal legal issues related to Portland Public Schools and K–12 public education.

District priorities and goals.
Labor law, affirmative action and employment discrimination.
Constitutional and administrative law.
Rules of evidence.
Juvenile law, student rights and discipline.
Current economic, political and sociological conditions affecting school districts.
Current issues and special challenges of large urban school districts and their communities.
Principles and practices of negotiations and collective bargaining.
District labor organizations and collective bargaining agreements.
Techniques and principles of high-quality customer service.
Internal consulting concepts and practices.
Principles and practices of effective leadership, management and supervision.
The ethnic, cultural, geographic, and socio-economic diversity of the populations served by the District.
Current technologies, statistical, financial, spreadsheet, presentation software.
Effective written and oral communication and presentation techniques.
Elements of effective leadership and supervision.

Ability to:

Prepare and render legal opinions upon request of the Board of Education, the Superintendent of Schools and District administrative staff.
Oversee and/or prepare and conduct litigation and administrative law hearings as directed.
Provide leadership and direction to the District's professional legal staff and activities.
Review existing and pending legislation related to procedural guidelines and District policies.
Maintain current knowledge of provisions of applicable federal, State and District laws, rules and regulations.
Interpret, apply and explain laws, rules, regulations, policies and procedures.
Analyze situations accurately and adopt an effective course of action.
Direct the maintenance of a variety of reports and files related to assigned activities.
Understand, interpret, apply and explain complex state and federal policy, law, regulation and court decisions applicable to school business and financial operations.
Provide internal legal consultation services.
Prepare and present complex data in written and oral reports, and represent the District in a variety of public settings.
Analyze data utilizing a variety of complex processes.
Manage and supervise staff and operations.
Advocate, model and implement Portland Public School's Racial Educational Equity Initiative and board policies.
Model ethical behavior and communicate high expectations of ethical behavior to others.
Maintain confidentiality of highly sensitive information.
Act judiciously under pressure.
Communicate effectively both orally and in writing.
Operate a variety of office machines, technologies and software.

Education and Training:

A Juris Doctorate from an accredited law school and license to practice law in the State of Oregon is required.

Experience:

Ten (10) years of experience in the practice of law, including substantial responsible experience as Counsel for a large urban public jurisdiction is required. Experience in a K-12 public school setting is highly desirable.

Any other combination of training and experience which demonstrates the applicant is likely to possess the required skills, knowledge and abilities may be considered.

Special Requirements:

Positions in this classification require the use of a personal automobile and possession of a valid Class C Oregon driver’s license.

Work hours will routinely include irregular hours, evening and weekend meetings and district functions.

WORKING CONDITIONS

The conditions herein are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. Persons with certain disabilities may be capable of performing the essential duties of this class with or without reasonable accommodation, depending on the nature of the disability.

Work Environment: Work is performed primarily in an office environment. Work hours occasionally include irregular hours, evening and weekend, meetings and district functions.

Hazards: Potential conflict situations.

Physical Demands: Primary functions require sufficient physical ability and mobility to work in an office; dexterity of hands and fingers to operate a computer keyboard and other technologies and office equipment; sitting, standing and walking for extended periods of time; kneeling, bending at the waist; lifting, pushing, pulling and carrying equipment, supplies and materials weighing up to 25 pounds; repetitive hand movement and fine coordination to use a computer keyboard; emotional stability to work effectively under pressure and to keep all aspects of the job under control; hearing and speaking to exchange information in person or on the telephone; seeing to read, prepare and assure the accuracy of documents.

FLSA: Exempt

Approval Date: September 26, 2014

Bargaining Unit: Non-Represented

Salary Schedule: SL 200

Portland Public Schools recognizes the diversity and worth of all individuals and groups and their roles in society.

The District is committed to equal opportunity and nondiscrimination in all its educational and employment activities. The District prohibits discrimination based on race; national or ethnic origin; color; sex; religion; age; sexual orientation; gender expression or identity; pregnancy; marital status; familial status; economic status or source of income; mental or physical disability or perceived disability; or military service.

Board of Education Policy 1.80.020-P