



JANUARY 2018

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Legislative Update

Ohio’s General Assembly has moved many bills in the last weeks of 2017, and Gov. Kasich has signed some of them. Below is an update on some of the education-related bills that are currently in the legislature or have recently passed.

HB 170 – Computer Science

HB 170 mandates that curriculum be developed for computer science and provides the option for secondary schools to offer courses in computer science that will count toward graduation requirements. After the bill passed in the House, the Senate amended it, and the House then reviewed and agreed to the changes. Gov. Kasich signed the bill on December 22.

Model curriculum

The bill requires the State Board of Education to adopt academic content standards and a model curriculum for computer science for grades K–12, including standards for introductory and advanced computer science courses in grades 9–12. Any school district or school may use these standards and curriculum, or any part of them, but no school is required to use the curriculum in whole or in part.

Units of instruction

A unit of computer science may be substituted for a unit of math or science but may not take the place of biology or life science courses. Advanced computer science may take the place of algebra II. However, the district must inform the student and his or her parents that secondary institutes may require completion of algebra II as a prerequisite to admission. Parents must sign a statement acknowledging that not taking algebra II may have an adverse effect on college admission. Career-tech students are still permitted to complete a career-based pathway mathematics course in lieu of algebra II or computer science.

Teacher licensure

Schools may employ only individuals who are licensed in computer science or those who have a license endorsement in computer technology and a passing score on a computer science content exam to teach computer science courses. Additionally, licensed educators who qualify for a supplemental teaching license for computer science may teach computer science courses; these educators may advance to a standard educator license, after teaching computer science for at least two years, by completing a pedagogy course in the applicable grade level.

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To teach advanced placement computer science courses, the educator must complete a professional development program endorsed or provided by the organization that creates and administers national advanced placement exams.

Fund

School boards may establish a computer science and technology fund to support computer science programs and professional development. The fund may include district or school funding, private funding, and future state funding, as long as these funds may legally be used for this purpose and are not designated for something else. This fund may be used for professional development, online assessments including instruction and data that support these assessments, wireless connectivity, network services, computer equipment purchases, and leveraging or matching additional private donations.

Auxiliary services funding

Private, nonreligious charter schools are permitted but not required to receive auxiliary services funding directly rather than from the local school district. In this case, these schools may contract with the local districts for certain health, support, scoring, and security services for which the funding may be used. After the end of each biennium, if the funding was insufficient, these schools may apply to ODE for funds to make up the difference.

SB 8 – Mid-Biennium Budget Update

This bill started out as a bill to assist school districts in purchasing technology and improving technology infrastructure, safety, and security, but it morphed into the mid-biennium budget update via an amendment. Gov. Kasich signed the bill on December 22. The following are provisions from the update that affect Ohio schools.

1:1 School Facilities Option Program

Under the newly established 1:1 School Facilities Option Program, the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission will provide state funds to eligible school districts to assist with additions or repairs to classrooms that meet the commission's design standards, in lieu of the district's participation in the Classroom Facilities Assistance Program. A school district is eligible if it has not entered into an agreement for any program under R.C. 3318. A district may receive up to \$1 million or 10 percent of the state's share of the total project cost, and the district must match 1:1 the funds received from the state.

SB 216 – Education Deregulation

The Senate Education Committee has held four hearings on SB 216 yet still has not voted on the bill. A number of school and education service center superintendents have provided proponent testimony on the bill; however, many others have opposed the bill as well. Although state superintendent Paolo DeMaria provided testimony as an "interested party," the majority of his testimony was in opposition to the bill. Education Committee Chair, Sen. Peggy Lehner, is rumored to be opposed to at least some of the provisions. Because the bill is still in the committee even after four hearings, Sen. Lehner might arrange for closed, interested party hearings in lieu of open committee hearings in January.

Most of the contention seems to be about removing the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA). Opponents, including DeMaria, say that the KRA provides data that helps teachers to better support students who need interventions and shows whether investments in early childhood education are justified. On the other hand, supporters argue that there are better, less time-consuming ways to tell if students are on track and the KRA does not provide teachers with the information they need. One educator called the KRA "a waste of time."

At the first hearing on October 18, the sponsor of the bill, Sen. Matt Huffman, noted that burdensome paperwork and tedious tasks distract teachers and superintendents from their primary role of educating students. Sen. Lehner said that although a number of things may be cumbersome, such as the KRA, there may be valid reasons to keep them.

The second hearing, November 8, was for proponent testimony. Several superintendents and other supporters of the bill said that the proposed changes will remove “unnecessary burdens” that draw attention away from teaching and learning. School leaders and teachers argued that they can more effectively educate students without the overwhelming number of regulations that dictate how schools should be run.

The third hearing, on December 6, was for opponent and interested party testimony. At this hearing, DeMaria called the bill “a step backward” and “a reactive approach.” He noted that he had considered each provision of the bill and whether it would benefit students. He opposed many of the changes in the bill, including the following:

- Eliminating the KRA
- College Credit Plus and requiring ODE to study the effectiveness of CCP
- Changes to substitute teacher licensure
- Eliminating number of excused absences from “excessive absences”
- Eliminating the student growth measure from the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System (OTES)
- Changes to grade bands for licensure

Thirteen individuals provided opponent testimony at the third hearing, mainly regarding the KRA and the licensure grade band changes. Several others were prepared to provide testimony, but because of the length of the meeting, they were asked to come back for a fourth, unplanned hearing.

On December 13, the Education Committee met to consider only this bill. Seventeen proponents, six opponents, and eight interested parties provided written testimony, and more than a dozen of them provided oral testimony at the hearing. Bob Sommers, founder of CF Educational Services, said that although he had advocated for some of the laws that this bill seeks to reverse, he has seen that these laws, though well-intentioned, have not delivered the intended results.

SB 240 vs. SB 216 – Changes to Ohio Teachers Evaluation System

Sen. Peggy Lehner recently proposed a new bill that would also mandate changes to OTES. The bill includes a number of important similarities to and differences from those proposed under SB 216.

R.C. 3319.111

SB 240 proposes only one substantive difference in R.C. 3319.111 from that of SB 216. In SB 216, the deadline for a local board to adopt a modified OTES policy is July 1, 2018, but SB 240 delays this deadline to July 1, 2019. Changes adopted in policy would become operative at the expiration of the current collective bargaining agreement in effect on the effective date of either adopted bill.

Both bills remove student growth measures as a component of OTES evaluations but require that “high quality” student performance measures be used as evidence in teacher evaluations. Both bills also tweak the requirements of professional growth plans for teachers on the “skilled” and “accomplished” off-year cycles. The bills delete the option to permit an accomplished teacher to submit a project in order to reduce the number of formal observations in an evaluation year.

R.C. 3319.112

SB 216 removes the requirement to use value-added data and incorporates the use of student assessment instruments into the evaluation system. SB 216 prohibits the use of shared attribution data in OTES as well under this section. It also removes a section of the law that previously required ODE to develop a list of student assessments that measure mastery of the course content for those grade levels where value-added data was not available.

SB 240 takes a different approach to the use of student measurement data. The bill specifically mandates that evaluations include at least two measures of “high quality” student data, which will be defined by ODE. The data

must incorporate the value-added progress dimension when applicable to the grade level or subject area taught by the teacher, as well as at least one other measure that demonstrates student learning. The bill specifies that the data may be used as evidence in any of the following five domains:

1. Knowledge of the students to whom the teacher provides instruction
2. The teacher's use of differentiated instructional practices based on the needs or abilities of individual students
3. Assessment of student learning
4. The teacher's use of assessment data
5. Professional responsibility and growth

SB 240 also prohibits the use of *both* shared attribution *and* student learning objectives as high-quality data, and maintains language that requires ODE to develop a list of student assessments that measure mastery of the course content for those grade levels where value-added data is not available.

Finally, both bills require ODE to provide guidance to districts on how high-quality student data may be used as evidence in OTES evaluations. ODE must also develop guidance on how information obtained from tools that were previously developed for the alternative framework may be used as evidence in OTES. The alternative framework tools include student surveys, student portfolios, peer review evaluations, teacher self-evaluations, and other locally determined tools.

R.C. 3319.114

Both bills repeal the alternative framework, which is codified in this section. However, both bills incorporate a change to R.C. 3319.112 that requires ODE to determine how a school district may use approved alternative framework tools as additional sources of evidence in evaluations.

Outlook

Regardless of which version passes, OTES will likely be modified by the legislature in the near future. Many of the changes proposed in SB 216 and SB 240 incorporate recommendations that were proposed by the Educator Standards Board in January 2016 and formally adopted by the State Board of Education on April 11, 2017.

Special Education Spotlight

Ennis Britton is pleased to announce a new feature in our *School Law Review* newsletter: **Special Education Spotlight!**

Each month this feature will highlight one or more issues in special education that are common to school districts. Based on feedback from our clients and special education professionals around the state, this column will discuss current topics that are pertinent to compliance in special education. As more and more resources are dedicated to special education, this has become a burgeoning area of law. We want to share with you the latest information and keep you well-informed of hot topics in special education.

To ensure that your special education directors and staff don't miss out on this series, make sure they subscribe to our monthly newsletter. To add subscribers, [email Barb Billow](#) with their name, email address, and title or position in the school district.

To kick off this feature, the following article discusses a recent court decision related to personal liability under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Special education professionals often wonder if liability stops with the district. This issue is not new to federal courts but may not have been addressed in every federal circuit yet, as the following article presents.

Are Employees Liable in Their Personal Capacity under IDEA?

Two school district employees in Washington state are being sued in their personal capacities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The district superintendent and special education director argued that IDEA permits legal action only against educational agencies, but because the employees failed to identify a federal court ruling in their jurisdiction stating that the IDEA does not allow for individual liability, the court denied the employees' motion to dismiss. *Crofts v. Issaquah Sch. Dist.*, 117 LRP 48968 (W.D. Wash 11/27/17).

In the same district in Washington, a previous court ruling held that the IDEA does not allow for individual liability. *Blanchard v. Morton School District*, 45 IDELR 210 (W.D. Wash. 2006). However, when the *Blanchard* case went to the Ninth Circuit Court on appeal, the court did not rule on that issue. Instead, the Ninth Circuit dismissed the parents' claim against the employees because of a procedural issue – the parents had not provided proper notice of their lawsuit. *Blanchard v. Morton Sch. Dist.*, 260 F. App'x 992, 9th Cir. 2007.

Most claims against school district employees in their individual capacity are brought under Section 1983, a federal law which serves as a vehicle for enforcing federal rights. Section 1983 provides the right to bring an action in federal court for federal civil rights violations:

Every person who, under color of any statute, ordinance, regulation, custom, or usage, of any State or Territory or the District of Columbia, subjects, or causes to be subjected, any citizen of the United States or other person within the jurisdiction thereof to the deprivation of any rights, privileges, or immunities secured by the Constitution and laws, shall be liable to the party injured in an action at law, suit in equity, or other proper proceeding for redress.

Most district courts that have considered this issue of personal liability under IDEA have held that only the agencies are liable – not the employees. In 1992 the Sixth Circuit ruled that a student was not entitled to general damages under the IDEA and therefore lacked a claim for monetary damages under Section 1983 for the alleged violation of his IDEA rights. *Crocker v. Tennessee Secondary Sch. Athletic Assoc.*, 980 F.2d 382 (6th Cir. 1992).

In the recent Washington state case, the district court judge noted that the employees did not identify any cases supporting their argument that they cannot be sued under the IDEA in their individual capacities. Furthermore, the opinion noted that the court itself did not find a decision from any federal circuit courts stating that school district employees cannot be held individually liable under IDEA.

What This Ruling Means to Your District

This ruling is out of Washington state, which is not in the Sixth Circuit as Ohio is. Furthermore, it is not a final decision but rather a denial of the school district's motion to dismiss the case. The case will continue in federal district court. Stay tuned to Ennis Britton for updates.

Board of Tax Appeals Can Hear CAUV Complaints

The Ohio Supreme Court recently ruled that the Board of Tax Appeals (BTA) has jurisdiction to hear challenges to current agricultural-use values (CAUVs).

Each year, the Ohio Tax Commissioner adopts a CAUV journal entry for different types of agricultural land. Agricultural land in Ohio is taxed based on its income potential rather than its fair market value. To determine this value, the tax commissioner considers such factors as soil productivity, crop prices, and others. Woodland on or

next to farmland is also valued based on income potential. For this land, the commissioner calculates the cost to clear the timber and then subtracts this cost from the cropland value to determine its value. The tax commissioner then issues a CAUV journal entry for both cropland and woodland.

A group of landowners believed that the tax commissioner had underestimated the cost to clear woodland. They claimed that the clearing cost is actually \$3350 per acre, more than three times the \$1000 per acre that the commissioner used. The result, they believed, was that their land was valued too highly and therefore was being taxed too highly.

They appealed the CAUV journal entry to the BTA, but the BTA dismissed the appeal on the ground that the journal entry was not a “final determination.” R.C. 5717.02 allows an appeal to the BTA from a “final determination” of the tax commissioner. The language of the statute does not make the distinction between a proposed entry and a journal entry but notes that appeals to the BTA must contest a final determination.

The landowners then appealed the BTA’s decision to the Ohio Supreme Court, who concluded that the CAUV journal entry is indeed a final determination, therefore subject to review by the BTA. The court noted that the tax commissioner’s journal entry is final in that it is the final step in the process of establishing the annual CAUV and it is not subject to revision as the proposed entry is. After public notice and hearing, the commissioner makes the journal entry, and this is used in the applicable counties for the next three tax years.

The Ohio Supreme Court has remanded this case back to the BTA, which must now hear the case and make a decision on the merits of the arguments.

What This Decision Means for Your District

Although a final decision on the arguments has not yet been made, the Supreme Court’s decision means that taxpayers may contest the Ohio Tax Commissioner’s CAUVs and the BTA must hear their cases. If the taxpayers are successful, school districts – particularly those in rural areas – may see a reduction in values of property subject to CAUV as well as a reduction in tax revenue.

– *Adams v. Testa*, Slip Opinion No. 2017-Ohio-8853.

Sunshine Laws: Open Meetings Act Primer for New Board Members

Public entities such as publicly elected school boards are considered a “public body” and are thus required to comply with Ohio Sunshine Laws. The Sunshine Laws comprise the Ohio Public Records Act and the Ohio Open Meetings Act. This general overview of the Open Meetings Act will assist new school board members in complying with Ohio’s laws that govern open meetings.

The Open Meetings Act requires three things of public bodies: to conduct their business in open meetings, to provide notice of the meetings, and to keep minutes of the meetings.

Meetings

A “meeting” is (1) any prearranged gathering of a public body (2) by a majority of its members (3) to discuss public business. A gathering that meets all three elements of this definition will be considered a meeting for the purposes of the Open Meetings Act, regardless of whether the public body initiated the gathering or it was initiated by another entity.

To be considered a meeting, a majority of the public body’s members must come together and be present. The requirement for a majority present applies to the actual public body as a whole and also the separate membership of all committees and subcommittees created by that public body. As an example, a school board consisting of seven members would require four or more members present to constitute a majority. If the council appoints a three-member finance committee, two of those members would constitute a majority of the finance committee.

Openness

The Open Meetings Act requires members of a public body to take official action, conduct deliberations, and discuss public business in an open meeting, unless the subject matter is specifically exempted by law or is specifically identified as proper subject matter to discuss in executive session.

Public bodies may not conduct meetings via electronic or telephone conferencing. Unless two members would constitute a majority, one-on-one conversations between individual members of a public body regarding its business, even in person or by telephone or email, do not violate the Open Meetings Act. However, the public body “may not circumvent the requirements of the statute by setting up back-to-back meetings of less than a majority of its members, with the same topics of public business discussed at each conversation.” See *State ex rel. Cincinnati Post vs. Cincinnati*, 76 Ohio St.3d 540. Under such circumstances, these discussions or email exchanges may be considered multiple parts of the same meeting and therefore violate the Open Meetings Act.

It is permissible for board members to communicate with each other regarding scheduling and other ministerial matters. It is also permissible for a board member to communicate directly with a superintendent or other administrators concerning public business.

Notice

Prior to the meeting, advance notice must be given, using a “reasonable” method that actually reaches the public and allows the public to become aware of the time and place of regular meetings. For regular meetings, this notice is provided through the organizational meeting, which is required to be held within the first 15 days of January and at which the board members must set the regular meeting schedule. For special meetings, the notice must also include the purpose of the meeting – i.e., the specific issues that will be discussed. Only those specific issues may be discussed at a special meeting.

Minutes

After the meeting, full and accurate minutes must be available to the public. These are typically provided in written form. Both draft and final approved minutes are public records. Minutes for an executive session need to reflect only the general subject matter of the executive session.

Executive Sessions

Executive sessions are closed-door sessions convened by a public body, after a roll call vote, and attended by only the members of the public body and persons they invite. A public body may hold an executive session only for a few specific purposes, which are set forth by law. No vote or other decision making or official action may take place during the executive session.

The Ohio [Attorney General's website](#) includes further information, training, and videos on the Ohio Sunshine Laws. The Attorney General's office also updates the [Sunshine Laws Manual](#) on an annual basis.

Updated School Records Retention Schedule

The Ohio History Connection recently updated its model retention schedule for school districts. This schedule identifies records that school districts commonly create and provides suggested length of retention for these records in accordance with statute or best practice. School districts are not required to update their retention schedules just because a new model has been published. Before a district adopts a new records retention schedule, it must be signed by a local responsible official and local records commission chair, the State Archives, and the State Auditor's Office. The new model schedule is available at the following links or at the [Ohio History Connection](#) website.

- [School Suggested Retention Schedule- Excel](#) (2017)
- [School Suggested Retention Schedule- PDF](#) (2017)

Firm News: Ennis Britton Super Lawyers!

We are very pleased to announce that four Ennis Britton attorneys have been selected as 2018 Ohio Rising Stars! No more than 2.5 percent of attorneys in Ohio receive this award, which is given for demonstrating excellence in the practice of law. Congratulations to these Ennis Britton attorneys!



Pamela Leist



Gary Stedronsky



Erin Wessendorf-Wortman



Megan Bair Zidian

Pamela Leist has been with Ennis Britton since 2005, when she began serving as a law clerk while attending law school. As a member of Ennis Britton's Special Education Team and Workers' Compensation Team, she represents school districts across Ohio on a number of issues including special education, student discipline, labor and employment matters, and more. She also serves as the firm's marketing coordinator. Pam is a frequent presenter on many education-related topics.

Gary Stedronsky has been with Ennis Britton since 2003. He started as a law clerk while attending law school. As a member of Ennis Britton's Construction and Real Estate Team and School Finance Team, he provides counsel to school districts throughout Ohio on matters related to property issues, public finance, tax incentives, and more. He is a published author and frequent presenter on many education-related topics. This is Gary's fifth year in a row to receive this prestigious award.

Erin Wessendorf-Wortman is a member of Ennis Britton's Workers' Compensation Team and Special Education Team. Erin represents school districts across Ohio on a variety of matters including labor and employment issues, civil rights, special education, public records, and more. She is a published author and frequent presenter on many education-related topics. This is Erin's second year in a row as a Rising Star.

Megan Bair Zidian advises school districts on a variety of education law matters. As a member of Ennis Britton's Special Education Team and School Finance Team, Megan represents boards of education on collective bargaining, student discipline, board policy, and much more. She is a frequent speaker at school conferences and in-service trainings for staff and administrators. This is Megan's second year in a row to receive the Rising Star award.

Super Lawyers is a national rating service that publishes a list of attorneys from more than 70 practice areas who have attained a high degree of peer recognition and professional achievement.

To qualify as a Rising Star, an attorney must score in the top 93rd percentile during a multiphase selection process that includes peer review and independent evaluations. A Super Lawyers rating is considered a very prestigious designation in the legal field, and we commend Pam, Gary, Erin, and Megan for their continued achievement!

Visit the Super Lawyers [website](#) to learn more.

Upcoming Deadlines

As your school district prepares for the next couple of months, please keep in mind the following upcoming deadlines. For questions about these requirements, please contact an Ennis Britton attorney.

- **January 15:** Deadline for boards of education of city, exempted village, vocational and local school districts to meet and organize (RC 3313.14); deadline for boards of education of city, exempted village, vocational and local school districts to adopt tax budgets for the coming school fiscal year (RC 5705.28(A)(1))
- **January 20:** Deadline for boards of education to submit fiscal tax-year budget to county auditor (RC 5705.30)
- **January 23:** Deadline to submit certification for May conversion levy to tax commissioner (RC 5705.219(B))
- **January 29:** Deadline to submit certification for May income tax levy to Ohio Department of Taxation (RC 5748.02(A))
- **January 31:** Deadline for ESC governing boards to meet and organize (RC 3313.14)
- **February 2:** Deadline to submit May emergency, current operating expenses or conversion levy to county auditor for May election (RC 5705.194, 5705.195, 5705.213, 5705.219)
- **February 7:** Deadline for county auditor to certify school district bond levy terms for May election (RC 133.18(C)); Deadline for school district to file resolution of necessity, resolution to proceed and auditor's certification for bond levy with board of elections for May election (RC 133.18(D)); Deadline to certify resultion for school district income tax levy, conversion levy or renewal conversion levy for May election to board of elections (RC 5748.02(C), 5705.219(C) and (G)); Deadline to submit continuing replacement, permanent improvement or operating levy for May election to board of elections (RC 5705.192, 5705.21, 5705.25); Deadline to submit emergency levy for May election to board of elections (RC 5705.195); Deadline to submit phased-in levy or current operating expenses levy for May election to board of elections (RC 5705.251(A))
- **February 28:** Deadline for secondary schools to provide information about College Credit Plus to all students enrolled in grades 6–11 (RC 3365.04(A))

Upcoming Presentations

SAVE THE DATE! 2017–2018 ADMINISTRATOR’S ACADEMY SEMINAR SERIES

September 28, 2017: Low-Stress Solutions to High-Tech Troubles – Archive available

January 25, 2018: Take Hold on Public Relations
Live video webinar

April 5, 2018: Special Education Legal Update
Live seminar in Cincinnati

July 12, 2018: Education Law Year in Review
Live video webinar

The September and April Administrator’s Academy presentations will be provided at live seminar locations as well as in a live audio webinar option. The January and July presentations will be offered via a live video webinar professionally produced by the Ohio State Bar Association. As always, an archive will be available for all presentations.

Participants must be registered to attend each event. All four webinars will be archived for those who wish to access the event at a later time. You may register on our [website](#) or contact Hannah via [email](#) or phone at 614-705-1333.

OTHER UPCOMING PRESENTATIONS

Ashland Leadership Academy Seminars: ALAS 2018

January 5 & 6, February 2 & 3, March 2 & 3

– John Britton, Giselle Spencer, Megan Bair Zidian

January 17: Ohio Association of Local School Superintendents

– Bill Deters

January 19: OASPA Winter Camp

– Bronston McCord and Gary Stedronsky

February 6: Brown County ESC & Southern Ohio ESC Special Education Update

– Jeremy Neff and Bill Deters

February 8: Trumbull County All Schools Leadership Academy

– John Britton

February 20: OSC/GCSSA Cyber Liability

– John Britton

March 2: Ohio School Boards Association Special Education Law Workshop

– Jeremy Neff

March 21: Trumbull County ESC Resident Educators

– Giselle Spencer

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**Want to stay up-to-date about important topics in school law?
Check out Ennis Britton's [Education Law Blog](#).**

Webinar Archives

Did you miss a past webinar or would you like to view a webinar again? If so, we are happy to provide that resource to you. To obtain a link to an archived presentation, contact Hannah via [email](#) or phone at 614-705-1333. Archived topics include the following:

- New Truancy and Discipline Laws
- Supreme Court Special Education Decisions
- Employee Licensure
- Transgender and Gender-Nonconforming Students
- Contract Nonrenewal
- Ohio Sunshine Laws
- Managing Workplace Injuries and Leaves of Absence
- Special Education: Challenging Students, Challenging Parents
- Fostering Effective Working Relationships with Boosters
- Requirements for Medicaid Claims
- Effective IEP Teams
- Cyberlaw
- FMLA, ADA, and Other Types of Leave
- Levies and Bonds
- OTES & OPES Trends and Hot Topics
- Tax Incentives
- Prior Written Notice
- Advanced Topics in School Finance
- Student Residency, Custody, and Homeless Students
- Student Discipline
- Media and Public Relations
- Gearing Up for Negotiations

Ennis Britton Practice Teams

At Ennis Britton, we have assembled a team of attorneys whose collective expertise enables us to handle the wide variety of issues that currently challenge school districts and local municipalities. From sensitive labor negotiations to complex real estate transactions, our attorneys can provide sound legal guidance that will keep your organization in a secure position.

When you have questions in general areas of education law, our team of attorneys help you make competent decisions quickly and efficiently. These areas include:

Labor & Employment Law

Student Education & Discipline

Board Policy & Representation

There are times when you have a question in a more specialized area of education or public law. In order to help you obtain legal support quickly in one of these areas of law, we have created topic-specific practice teams. These teams comprise attorneys who already have experience in and currently practice in these specialized areas.

Construction/Real Estate

Construction Contracts • Easements •
Land Purchases & Sales • Liens •
Mediations • Litigation

Team Members:

Ryan LaFlamme
Bronston McCord
Gary Stedronsky

Workers' Compensation

Administrative Hearings •
Court Appeals • Collaboration with TPAs •
General Advice

Team Members:

Ryan LaFlamme
Pam Leist
Giselle Spencer
Erin Wessendorf-Wortman

Special Education

Due Process Claims • IEPs • Change of
Placement • FAPE • IDEA • Section 504 •
any other topic related to Special Education

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Pam Leist
Jeremy Neff
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Giselle Spencer
Erin Wessendorf-Wortman
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School Finance

Taxes • School Levies •
Bonds • Board of Revision

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