



Iredell - Statesville Schools

Together, Ensuring *Student Success* by Igniting a *Passion* for Learning

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Iredell-Statesville Schools Board of Education Attorney

RFP Issue Date: May 13, 2026

Proposal Due Date: May 29, 2026

Proposal Submission Location: 549 North Race Street, Statesville, NC 28677

Contact Person: Kelly McCarraher, Board Clerk

Introduction

Iredell-Statesville Schools Board of Education is soliciting proposals from qualified law firms and/or attorneys licensed to practice law in the State of North Carolina to provide legal services. The Board seeks legal counsel with extensive experience in North Carolina public education law and demonstrated expertise in advising public school systems on governance, personnel, student matters, litigation, contracts, policy, compliance, and operational issues.

Purpose

The purpose of this Request for Proposals is to identify and select a highly qualified attorney or law firm capable of providing timely, practical, and effective legal counsel to support the mission and operations of the district.

The Board seeks a legal partner who demonstrates:

- Strong knowledge of North Carolina public school law
- Excellent responsiveness and communication
- Sound judgment and problem-solving skills
- Ability to work collaboratively with board members and district leadership
- Experience handling sensitive and high-profile matters

Scope of Services

The Board Attorney or selected law firm shall provide comprehensive legal counsel and representation to the Board of Education and the Superintendent in matters related to

school governance, employment, students services, operations, litigation, and regulatory compliance. Services may include, but are not limited to, the following:

A. Board Governance, Meetings, and General Counsel Services

The Board Attorney shall serve as legal counsel to the Board of Education and provide guidance related to governance, legal compliance, and board operations.

Responsibilities may include:

- Attendance at regular board meetings, work sessions, emergency meetings, special-called meetings, and closed sessions as requested by the Board.
- Serving as Parliamentarian and advising the Board on parliamentary procedure, Robert's Rules of Order, and the Board's adopted bylaws and procedures.
- Advising the Board regarding compliance with the North Carolina Open Meetings Law, Public Records Law, ethics requirements, and conflict-of-interest matters.
- Assisting with the lawful conduct of public comment periods and advising on constitutionally permissible, content-neutral restrictions.
- Drafting and reviewing motions and procedures necessary to enter and conduct closed sessions in accordance with N.C. General Statutes.
- Providing legal guidance during executive sessions and ensuring discussions remain within the scope of the authorized closed-session purpose.
- Reviewing or assisting with confidential closed-session minutes or general accounts as required by law.
- Reviewing, interpreting, and advising on board policies, administrative procedures, and governance practices.
- Providing legal updates and governance training to the Board and district leadership.
- Advising on Superintendent contracts, evaluations, and related governance matters.

B. Personnel and Employment Law Services

The Board Attorney may provide legal representation and counsel regarding employment-related matters, including:

- Employee discipline, dismissal, suspension, nonrenewal, and grievance matters.
- Personnel hearings, appeals, and administrative proceedings.
- Employment contracts and employment-related agreements.
- Workplace investigations and compliance reviews.

- Guidance regarding ADA, FMLA, Title VII, Title IX, and other federal and state employment laws.
- EEOC matters, discrimination claims, harassment complaints, and related investigations or proceedings.
- Preventive legal guidance related to personnel practices and employment risk management.

C. Student Services, Hearings, and School Operations

The Board Attorney may advise and represent the district in student-related legal matters and operational compliance issues, including:

- Student discipline hearings, appeals, and quasi-judicial proceedings.
- Guidance regarding due process requirements and evidentiary procedures during hearings.
- When necessary, establishing ethical separation between attorneys advising the Board and attorneys representing the administration in contested matters.
- IDEA, Section 504, FERPA, Title IX, student records, and student privacy matters.
- Student rights and constitutional issues.
- School safety, emergency response, and crisis-related legal guidance.
- Athletics, extracurricular activities, and student participation matters.

D. Contracts, Construction, and Business Operations

The Board Attorney may provide legal services related to district operations and business matters, including:

- Review, drafting, and negotiation of contracts, agreements, memoranda of understanding, and vendor agreements.
- Construction, procurement, bidding, and facility-related legal matters.
- Real property transactions and land use matters.
- Insurance, liability, and risk management issues.
- Preventive legal review of agreements, personnel actions, and operational decisions to reduce exposure to litigation or regulatory violations.

E. Litigation and Administrative Representation

The Board Attorney or law firm may represent the district in legal proceedings and dispute resolution matters, including:

- Representation before state and federal courts.
- Representation in administrative hearings, agency proceedings, and appeals.
- Mediation, settlement negotiations, and alternative dispute resolution.

- Coordination with insurance carriers, third-party administrators, and outside counsel as necessary.
- Development of legal strategy and litigation management.

F. Preventive Legal Services, Policy Review, and Legislative Guidance

The Board Attorney shall provide proactive legal guidance intended to minimize legal exposure and ensure ongoing compliance with changing laws and regulations. Services may include:

- Periodic review of Board policies and administrative procedures to ensure compliance with federal and state law.
- Guidance regarding newly enacted legislation, regulatory changes, and emerging legal issues affecting public education.
- Preventive compliance training and workshops for Board members, administrators, and staff.
- Ongoing legal consultation intended to identify and mitigate operational, governance, personnel, and compliance risks.

Minimum Qualifications

Respondents must meet the following minimum qualifications:

- Licensed to practice law in the State of North Carolina
- Demonstrated experience representing public school districts or boards of education
- Knowledge of North Carolina education law
- Ability to provide timely legal advice and emergency response support
- Professional liability insurance coverage

Proposal Requirements

Proposals should include the following information:

A. Cover Letter

Include:

- Name of firm
- Primary contact person
- Office location(s)
- Statement of interest
- Signature of authorized representative

B. Firm Background and Qualifications

Provide:

- History of the firm

- Areas of legal practice
- Number of attorneys
- Experience representing public school systems
- Description of education law experience

C. Assigned Personnel

Identify:

- Lead attorney
- Attorneys expected to provide services
- Relevant experience and qualifications
- Resumes or biographies

D. Relevant Experience

Describe experience in:

- Public school law
- Board governance
- Personnel law
- Student matters
- Litigation
- Construction/procurement
- Crisis response and emergency guidance

E. References

Provide at least three references from current or former public school district clients, including:

- District name
- Contact person
- Title
- Phone number
- Email address

F. Responsiveness and Availability

Describe:

- Typical response times
- Emergency availability
- After-hours procedures
- Availability for board meetings and special called meetings
- Backup coverage procedures

G. Fee Proposal

Provide:

- Hourly billing rates
- Rates by attorney and staff level
- Retainer information, if applicable
- Board meeting attendance fees
- Litigation rates
- Travel costs
- Billing increments
- Any alternative fee structures

H. Conflicts of Interest

Disclose any current or potential conflicts of interest, including representation involving:

- Charter schools
- Educational vendors
- Employees adverse to public school districts
- Other entities that may present conflicts

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals may be evaluated using criteria including, but not limited to:

Criteria	Weight
Public school law experience	40%
Qualifications of assigned attorneys	20%
Responsiveness and availability	10%
Cost proposal	15%
References and reputation	10%
Training and preventive services	5%

The district reserves the right to conduct interviews, request additional information, negotiate terms and reject any or all proposals

Terms of Services

The anticipated term of the agreement shall be a 3-year contract running July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2029, with the possibility of renewal upon mutual agreement of the parties and approval by the Iredell-Statesville Board of Education.

Submission Instructions

Proposals must be labeled: Board Attorney RFP 2026-2029 and received no later than:

Friday, May 29, 2026 at 4:00 p.m.

Submit sealed proposals by mail (US Post Office, FedEx, UPS) or hand delivery to:

Kelly McCarraher
Executive Assistant to the Superintendent and Board Clerk
Iredell-Statesville Schools
549 North Race Street, Statesville, NC 28677

Late submissions may not be considered.

Questions Regarding the RFP

Questions regarding this RFP must be submitted via email by Monday, May 25, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. to:

Dr. Jeff James
Superintendent
Iredell-Statesville Schools
jeff_james@iss.k12.nc.us

Reservation of Rights

The district reserves the right to:

- Reject any or all proposals
- Waive informalities or irregularities
- Request clarification or proposals
- Negotiate with any respondent
- Cancel the RFP at any time
- Select the proposal deemed to be in the best interest of the district

All submitted bids become the property of Iredell-Statesville Schools.

Confidentiality

Respondents acknowledge that certain district matters may involve confidential personnel, student, legal, or closed session information. The selected attorney firm will be expected to maintain strict confidentiality in accordance with applicable law and professional standards.

Equal Opportunity

Iredell-Statesville Schools is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or other protected classifications under applicable law.