

LONG BEACH UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT



invites your interest for the position of

**GENERAL
COUNSEL**

The Long Beach Unified School District

The Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD) has earned a reputation as one of America's finest school systems, winning many awards as a national and international model of excellence. The Global Education Study by the nonprofit Battelle for Kids organization has previously listed LBUSD among five of the world's highest performing school systems. McKinsey & Company, one of the country's foremost consulting firms, has issued a report naming LBUSD as one of the world's top 20 school systems, and one of the top three in the U.S. in terms of sustained and significant improvements. The report has been described as the most comprehensive analysis of global school system reform ever assembled.

The school district was named a national winner of the Broad Prize for Urban Education, recognizing America's best urban school system for increasing student achievement. LBUSD is a five-time finalist for the prize. The district also was listed among California "Districts Beating the Odds" by the Learning Policy Institute. Long Beach was identified as a "positive outlier" district where Latinx, white, and African American students achieve at higher than predicted levels, performing better than students of similar racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds in most other districts. LBUSD also earned the District of the Year award from the national business news publisher Industry Dive and its publication, Education Dive. The honor is part of the Dive Awards recognizing education's "top disruptors and innovators."

Established in 1885, LBUSD currently educates 65,500 students in 84 public schools located in the cities of Long Beach, Lakewood, Signal Hill, and Avalon on Catalina Island. With a team of more than 12,000 full-time and part-time employees, the school district is the largest employer in Long Beach. The fourth largest school district in California, LBUSD serves one of the most diverse large cities in the United States, and dozens of languages are spoken by local students.

The school district has won widespread recognition for excellence in academic achievement, the arts, and athletics. LBUSD's successes have been chronicled by national media including the New York Times, Washington Post, The Atlantic, U.S. News and World Report, USA Today, Newsweek, Time, Parade, Sports Illustrated, ESPN, Good Morning America, NBC's Today Show, CBS's This Morning, CNN Headline News and others.

Local schools continue to post significant gains in student achievement. LBUSD has also established educational partnerships with more than 1,300 local businesses, which recognize the district's role in developing a well-educated, highly skilled work force. Thousands of Volunteers in Public Schools (VIPS) assist teachers and students in classrooms. Local schools have won numerous California Distinguished, National Blue Ribbon and National Green Ribbon awards. The District has a flourishing facilities program, having passed three local bond measures totaling \$4.4 billion. This is testament to the support and commitment of the community to its schools.

These are the hallmarks of one of America's finest school systems. A total commitment to continuous improvement and equity is what makes the Long Beach Unified School District a national and international leader in preparing young men and women for success. Locally, the District has long held a reputation for having a deep sense of commitment to the community, fostering positive relationships with stakeholders, embracing a culture of outstanding teamwork and upholding the values of excellence and equity.

The Position of General Counsel and Ideal Candidate Profile

The General Counsel will be a key member of the District's Senior Team and will plan, organize, direct, and provide professional legal services and counsel to the district in a wide variety of legal matters such as labor and employment, student rights, facilities, litigation, liability, and school bonds. Under the direction of the Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Jill Baker, the General Counsel will serve as the District's primary legal advisor while working closely with District staff and Board, and represent the district before a variety of administrative and legislative bodies. This position was brought in-house two years ago and represents an outstanding opportunity to be part of the Senior Team as it strives to achieve positive outcomes for its students and their families through creative initiatives, strategies, and improvements.

The new General Counsel will be a well-rounded legal generalist who embraces the opportunity to join an impressive and dedicated Senior Team. The current incumbent has made significant strides in transitioning to a full service in-house legal function including the hiring of a legal assistant and an attorney to provide legal support in the areas of student services and

special education. Key priorities moving forward include the review of all practice areas to determine the benefit of additional in-house legal support, and a continual focus on establishing policies and procedures to ensure long-term efficiency and cost savings for the district's legal function. In providing legal counsel to staff, accessibility, collaboration, and partnering to provide positive solutions will continue to be priorities.

The top areas of focus for the General Counsel will be:

- ◆ Accessibility – Foster a culture of responsiveness. Encourage staff to seek assistance and advice when needed. Complete the transition to an in-house legal function and complete and implement the plan for the overall legal function.
- ◆ Cost Analysis – Understand the functions of each District office and the legal support that is needed for the individual groups. Review current legal work and billable hours from outside firms. Oversee the work and create a management system of assigning and tracking activities and costs.
- ◆ Policy – Partner with others in defining policy-related concepts and procedures. Work with various groups in the district to proactively address upcoming needs and concerns. Stay abreast of legislation that would affect the district. Interpret, implement, and update the district's policies on an ongoing basis.
- ◆ Discretion – Be thoughtful in confidential matters while also acknowledging the political aspects of the role.
- ◆ Best practices – Stay abreast of educational law changes, understand the challenges and plan with appropriate staff. See the need for change and introduce various solutions or policy revisions in a collaborative manner.
- ◆ Communication – Have outstanding communication skills. Confidently present the legal aspects of educational law in understandable terms. Be able to answer questions in a clear manner.
- ◆ Relationships – Build a trusting and reliable relationship with staff, Senior Team, and members of the Board. Interface with all stakeholders in a friendly and understanding way.

The ideal candidate will be a visionary leader with a value system that engenders ethics, trust, and collaboration and embodies a commitment to racial equity, diversity, and inclusion. The new General Counsel will operate in a professional, proactive, transparent, approachable, and consultative style while providing legal guidance and consultative information in a relatable manner. The new incumbent will have excellent interpersonal and communication skills, a high level of emotional intelligence, a respect for cultural diversity, and will embrace this opportunity to be a part of vital mission driven work, while developing long lasting work relationships.

This position requires a solid understanding of the Brown Act and Public Records Act and be familiar with California Education, Government, and Labor Codes, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and, Alternative Dispute Resolution processes and methods and procedures required to provide legal services to administration and a governing body of a public agency.

Requirements of the position:

- ◆ A Juris Doctorate degree from an accredited law school
- ◆ Active memberships and good standing in the State Bar of California throughout employment is required.
- ◆ Ten years of experience practicing law including experience providing legal counsel to school districts, educational institutions, or similar public agencies.

Prior litigation experience, experience working with K-12 schools districts in California, exposure to legislation, policy, and the regulatory environment within K-12 public education are highly desirable. Prior supervision of professional and administrative support staff is also preferred.

Any qualifying combination of education, training, and experience, which demonstrates the required skills, knowledge or abilities to hold the position may be considered.

Compensation and Benefits

The Long Beach Unified School District offers an excellent compensation and benefits program. The base salary for this position is \$241,549-\$283,645 dependent upon the qualifications of the selected candidate. The attractive benefits program includes:

- ◆ Retirement: The district participates in the California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS). The district participates in Social Security.
- ◆ Medical Insurance: Coverage for employees and eligible dependents. The three medical plan options include Kaiser Permanente HMO, Aetna HMO, or Aetna Choice POS II (Open Access).
- ◆ Dental Insurance: Two dental plan options are offered, Delta Premier Plus PPO or Delta USA HMO.
- ◆ Vision Insurance: EyeMed Vision provides comprehensive vision care for employees only.
- ◆ Vacation: Accrual at the rate of .081 for each hour worked for a total of 21 days a year for full-time 12-month employees.
- ◆ Holidays: 14 paid holidays annually.
- ◆ Sick /Personal Leave: Accrual at the rate of 13 days a year. Employees of other California school districts who have accrued sick leave may transfer it to LBUSD in accordance with the California Education Code.
- ◆ Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA): Access to two FSA's including a Health Care FSA and a Dependent Care FSA.
- ◆ Deferred Compensation: the district offers two voluntary pre-tax programs including a 403(B) and a 457(B).
- ◆ Employee Wellness: District provides a program through Employee Assistance Service for Education (EASE) to assist with personal and work/life issues.



The Process

To pursue this exceptional career opportunity, please visit the Avery Associates Career Portal on our website at www.averyassoc.net/current-searches/ to upload your letter of interest, resume, and contact information, including email addresses for five work-related references (who will not be contacted until after a preliminary interview takes place).

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The final filing date has been extended to April 22, 2024.

Those candidates who are identified as having backgrounds most closely associated with the position requirements are anticipated to meet with the search firm during the mid-to-late April timeframe. Subsequent interviews for those invited to meet with the LBUSD are anticipated to take place in early-to-mid May, with an appointment desired by late May.

If you have any questions regarding this position, please feel free to contact Paul Kimura at 408.472.7936 or by email: paulk@averyassoc.net.