



WOODBRIDGE SCHOOL DISTRICT

40 Beecher Road – South
Woodbridge, Connecticut 06525

Robert F. Gilbert – Superintendent
Cheryl Mammen – Special Services Director | Alfred Pullo, Jr. – Director of Business Services/Operations

MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Education Members
FROM: Robert F. Gilbert 
DATE: May 21, 2020
RE: FOLLOW-UP SUMMARY ON SHARED LEGAL SERVICES

1. Each of the four (4) BOWA districts retains different firms and arrangements for General and Special Education legal services.
2. In a recent inquiry to Connecticut school districts, no district replied that they had an *in-house attorney*.
3. BOWA Superintendents (including Woodbridge) are pleased with their legal counsel and would not support changing/ sharing services for a variety of reasons including the items below.
4. In situations where BOWA districts work together on matters of mutual common interest (ex. bus contract), they can discuss the use of just one legal service to serve the needs (and rotate this).
5. Boards and Superintendents develop important working relationships with their counsel that over time provide continuity with resulting costs savings. This applies to Woodbridge in such areas as collective bargaining, special education and ongoing employee human resource situations.
6. Superintendents rely on their firm to have several counsel available with specialties - labor, special ed, municipal law and litigation. At the very least a district or set of districts would need at least two experienced educational attorneys (General and Special Education). The cost of this would be nearly double what the combined districts pay currently.
7. Just about all districts pay an hourly rate. Flat rates (level) will not always provide you with the experienced legal counsel you are looking for. A retainer based system is predicated on the average of past years costs and is more conducive to businesses that have cash flow challenges / services.

SUMMARY

While it is not recommended to share legal services, the Board could make this part of any future BOWA combined Board discussions.

RFG/med