



## **Tennessee State Board of Education: General Counsel**

### **Position Description**

The Tennessee State Board of Education (“State Board” or “Board”) is seeking a full-time General Counsel. The General Counsel serves as a key leader on the Board’s executive leadership team and is charged with managing a comprehensive array of responsibilities including, but not limited to, advising Board members and staff on legal issues relating to K-12 education law and administrative law, drafting and reviewing Board rules and policies, and managing a team of attorneys handling educator license discipline actions.

Collaboration, confidence, and communication are key to this position. The General Counsel works closely with the state Attorney General’s office and the Secretary of State to promulgate Board-approved rules, including regularly testifying in front of legislative committees in support of rule promulgation and legislation. The General Counsel collaborates regularly with counsel from the Department of Education and other state agencies, as well as counsel to local boards of education. The General Counsel also regularly provides presentations to a variety of stakeholder groups on legal issues.

This position will report to the Executive Director of the State Board and will manage the legal team consisting of four attorneys and two paralegals. The ideal candidate will have a deep background in education law, ability to communicate effectively both orally and in writing, ability to manage multiple competing and high-stakes priorities, and to work with a variety of education stakeholders.

The General Counsel is a position with an important responsibility to ensure Tennessee continues to adopt policies and standards that are in the best interest of students through advancement of the goals articulated in the board’s [Master Plan](#).

### **About the Tennessee State Board of Education**

The [State Board](#)’s mission is to ensure policies and systems are in place so that all Tennessee students are prepared for success after graduation. We work closely with the Tennessee Department of Education, local school districts, and stakeholders across the state to ensure equity, oversight, and transparency in K-12 education policy.

Additionally, the State Board is charged by law with complete jurisdiction over the issuance of K-12 educator licenses in Tennessee. This includes the intake of reports of educator misconduct from school districts, and responsibility for determining appropriate license discipline action including denial, formal reprimand, suspension, or revocation of an educator’s license.

### **Job Responsibilities**

- Serve as one of four members of the SBE Leadership Team, reporting directly to the Executive Director.

- Provide sound legal advice to the State Board and its staff on all legal matters relating to K-12 education law, administrative law, open meetings, open records, ethics, etc. Sit with the Board at all quarterly meetings and workshops and be prepared to respond to member legal questions as appropriate.
- Liaise with the state Attorney General's office in all litigation involving the Board filed in state or federal court. Produce quarterly updates to Board members and staff regarding ongoing litigation in consultation with the Attorney General's office.
- Manage the full legal team consisting of four attorneys and two paralegals. This includes providing direction and strategic assistance to the attorneys handling educator license discipline matters, overseeing the Deputy General Counsel, developing team vision and team goals, and ensuring the effective operation of the team as a whole.
- Work closely with representatives from the Office of the Attorney General and Secretary of State to file, revise, and promulgate all Board-approved rules in accordance with Board statutory authority and the Uniform Administrative Procedures Act. Preside over all rulemaking hearings to collect public feedback regarding rules. Join the Director of Legislative and External Affairs to present rules to the Joint Government Operations Committee of the General Assembly monthly.
- Serve as a key member of the State Board item review team to carefully review and edit all proposed rule and policy revisions prior to each quarterly or special called Board meeting. Ensure proposed rules and policies are aligned with the law, within the Board's statutory authority, and consistent with other Board rules and policies.
- Provide effective legal support to the State Board's policy and external affairs teams to ensure the success of major workstreams including, but not limited to textbook waivers, standards review, and charter school authorizer evaluations.
- With the Deputy Executive Director of Legislative and External Affairs, attend legislative meetings as necessary to advance the interest of the Board. Knowledgeably testify at legislative committee meetings when necessary.
- In consultation with Board members, staff, and Department of Education, identify and draft potential legislation relating to issues affecting the Board. Support the Deputy Executive Director of Legislative and External Affairs and Executive Director as needed to gain passage of the Board's annual budget.
- Respond to requests from Board members and staff, school districts, educators, parents, and other education stakeholders regarding policy and legal matters. This involves conducting legal research, writing memorandums, and presenting or providing legal advice to the Board and Board staff.

### **Qualifications**

We are seeking candidates who have:

- Strong legal research and writing skills, including excellent oral and written advocacy skills.
- Litigation/case management experience, including managing multiple projects or cases.
- The ability to work efficiently and effectively with a high-volume workload.
- Knowledge of state and federal education laws and state administrative procedures.
- Strong personal presence and communication skills necessary to interact and develop relationships with internal and external stakeholders.

- Proven leadership experience and ability to effectively manage a team.
- Organization, attention to detail, and an interest in crafting student-focused policies to achieve the Board’s vision.
- Experience developing and conducting effective and engaging trainings and outreach.
- Proven ability to produce high-quality work both independently and as part of a team.
- A demonstrated commitment to meeting and exceeding expectations, and a history of achieving stated objectives while managing varied, competing matters and projects.
- Aptitude to work in a collaborative, collegial, and respectful manner, and to maintain positive and professional relationships with coworkers.
- Commitment to teamwork, collaboration, transparency, and public service.

A bachelor’s degree from an accredited four-year college or university, a Juris Doctorate, and 7-10 years of experience as a licensed attorney is required. Candidates must possess a current Tennessee law license in good standing. Prior experience with board relations and K-12 education strongly preferred.

The State Board’s office is located in Nashville, Tennessee, and operates under a hybrid working arrangement that includes both in-office presence and remote work. Applicants must be located in or willing to relocate to the Nashville area.

**Salary**

Salary for this position ranges from \$160,000 - \$170,000 commensurate with experience. In addition, a comprehensive [benefits package](#) is included.

**How to Apply**

Please send a resume and cover letter to Dr. Sara Morrison, Executive Director, at [Sara.Morrison@tn.gov](mailto:Sara.Morrison@tn.gov).