School Boards and Independent Schools

School boards and schools are highly scrutinized and regulated institutions with diverse and sophisticated legal requirements. That's why you need the unmatched cross-practice expertise of BLG, the top choice of the largest boards and oldest schools in Canada for decades. No other firm offers the scope and depth of our experience – from union arbitrations to high-stakes litigation, school board real estate to tax – ensuring you get responsive, efficient and practical advice, in English or French, to lighten your load.

Experience

- Counsel to the largest public and Catholic school boards in Ontario in numerous arbitrations involving collective agreement interpretation, discipline and discharge, sick leave and disability management, teacher supervision and preparation and planning time, workplace health and safety (including Covid-19 issues), and job security.
- Counsel to the largest school boards associations in central arbitrations and Ontario Labour Relations Board proceedings, including unlawful strike and unfair labour practice applications.
- Successfully represented a school board in its response, at the Ontario Superior Court, to two applications for judicial review alleging infringement on rights to freedom of expression.
- Successfully represented one of Canada's largest school boards at the Ontario Superior Court in a matter involving the censure of a trustee.
- Counsel to school leadership regarding assault allegations, including crisis containment, media response, advice regarding the investigation and working with police.
- Acted as preferred cyber security breach counsel to member school boards of the Ontario School Board Insurance Exchange since it launched its cyber security insurance program.
- Argued the leading case on the employment-related records exclusion in the *Municipal Freedom of Information Act* and other significant school board freedom of information appeals.
- Assisted some of Canada's largest school boards with surplus lands and properties, including disposition, long-term land leases and engagement with neighbouring landowners for innovative mixed-use developments.
- Appeared at the Supreme Court of Canada in *R v. Cole*, a precedent-setting case about a high school teacher's expectations of privacy regarding his work computer.
- Acted for a Toronto independent school in its purchase of a neighbouring school, which was described by the headmaster as a "once-in-a-lifetime opportunity." The purchase price was structured to include a leaseback, vendor take-back mortgage, third party financing, the creation of a new affiliated charity, a correction of the legal description of the property, and analysis associated with the potential redevelopment of the property.

- Acted for one of the largest school districts in British Columbia on all land- and construction-related matters for many years, including the acquisition and build-out of many schools.
- Acted for an independent school on a long-term lease for a brand-new campus tailored specifically for Grade 7 to Grade 12 students, including a robust outline of construction obligations for the landlord and tenant to convert the existing building to a school.

BLG | Canada's Law Firm

As the largest, truly full-service Canadian law firm, Borden Ladner Gervais LLP (BLG) delivers practical legal advice for domestic and international clients across more practices and industries than any Canadian firm. With over 800 lawyers, intellectual property agents and other professionals, BLG serves the legal needs of businesses and institutions across Canada and beyond – from M&A and capital markets, to disputes, financing, and trademark & patent registration.

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