

Office of School Board Attorney  
JulieAnn Rico, Board Attorney

**SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR AUTHORIZATION TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT FOR THE POSITION OF ASSOCIATE ATTORNEY, ACADEMIC PROGRAMS**

**COMMITTEE: SCHOOL SUPPORT ACCOUNTABILITY**

The Academic Associate Attorney, Academic Programs provides legal advice and represents the School Board in the areas of academic programs/contracts, student truancy, expulsions, and disciplinary matters, Exceptional Student Education, student records, custody issues, charter schools, and the Safe School Program. Works closely with assigned departments to effectively implement all pertinent policies.

Conditions of the employment contract for the position of Associate Attorney, Academic Programs provide for an initial employment term from January 8, 2007 to January 7, 2009, with compensation at an annual salary of \$120,000.00, subject to increase as the Board, Board Attorney and the contracted employee may agree. The contract also provides for the individual to be granted vacation and sick leave as provided to managerial exempt personnel. The employee shall be entitled to membership in the Florida Retirement System in the Senior Management Classification as required by Florida Retirement System Rule 60S-1.004.

The employment contract may be terminated by the Board Attorney or employee on 30 days written notice to the Board and the Board Attorney, or to the employee, as the case may be, it being understood that except as so provided, the contracted employee's right to employment shall be subject to the Board Attorney's absolute right to terminate this agreement at will.

**Ms. Mary S. Lawson, Esq.** is recommended for appointment to the contracted position of Associate Attorney, Academic Programs. Ms. Lawson received her Juris Doctorate from Howard University School of Law, Washington, D.C (Top 10%). Ms. Lawson has been a member in good standing of the Florida Bar since October 1, 2002. Ms. Lawson was formerly an Assistant School Board Attorney for The School Board of Broward County.

**RECOMMENDED:** That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, appoint **Ms. Mary S. Lawson.** to the contracted position of Associate Attorney, Academic Programs, Office of the School Board Attorney effective January 8, 2007, upon completion of background check, at an annual salary of \$120,000.00 through January 7, 2009.

**Mary Stablein Lawson**

4800 S.W. 10th St., Plantation, FL 33317  
(954) 821-9747 (mobile); (754) 321-2050 (office)  
[maryslaws@bellsouth.net](mailto:maryslaws@bellsouth.net); [msslawson@browardschools.com](mailto:msslawson@browardschools.com)

**Education:**

- 2002     **Juris Doctorate**, Howard University School of Law, Washington, D.C. (Top 10%)  
1992     **Master of Arts in Teaching**, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA  
1991     **Bachelor of Arts**, Political Science, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA

**Law Review:**

- 2001-02   **Executive Publications Editor**, Howard Law Journal  
2000-02   **Law Journal Member**, Howard Law Journal

**Publications:**

- An IDEA Gone Out of Control: Covington v. Knox County School Board, 45 How. L.J. 643 (Spring 2002)
- Hearing Procedures for a Section 504 Claim by a Non-ESE Student in Florida, Florida Education Law Journal, Vol. 3:3 (May 2005)

**Memberships/Committees:**

- Florida Bar, Member in Good Standing (admitted 10/01/02); Education Law Committee
- District of Columbia Bar, Member in Good Standing (currently inactive)
- United States District Court for the Southern District of Florida
- Broward County Bar Association/Law-Related Education Committee
- Florida School Board Attorneys Association
- American Bar Association
- NSBA Council of School Attorneys

**Certifications:**

- Teaching Certificates - Florida, Social Studies 6-12 (reinstatement pending); Maryland, Social Studies 6-12 (expired); Pennsylvania Social Studies 7-12 (expired)

**Employment:**

- 08/04 to present     **Assistant School Board Attorney, The School Board of Broward County, Florida**, 600 S.E. 3rd Ave., 11th Floor, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33301  
**Duties:** Advise school district personnel; conduct legal research; draft pleadings and memoranda concerning various legal issues; represent the School Board at due process hearings and in federal court concerning special education cases; attend statewide meetings concerning school law; other legal duties as assigned.
- 05/01 to 07/04     **Attorney/Law Clerk, Hogan & Hartson, LLP**, 555 13th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20004

**Duties:** Conducted legal research and drafted legal documents in the fields of education, *pro bono*, government regulations, litigation, international trade, and immigration; represented clients in legal proceedings; worked collaboratively on cross-practice teams; supervised and evaluated work of paralegals and secretary; taught pre-law course on volunteer basis.

- 08/01 to 12/01     **Dean's Fellow, Howard University School of Law**, 2900 Van Ness St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008  
**Duties:** Assisted Professor of Legal Writing by evaluating student classwork; developed curriculum; taught class.
- 06/00 to 08/00     **Coordinator, Harry L. Blackmun Summer Law College for Teens**, United Methodist Church, Baltimore-Washington Conference, 7178 Columbia Gateway Dr., Columbia, MD 21046  
**Duties:** Developed curriculum and taught summer law program for high school students; coordinated volunteer guest-teachers; mentored students; produced final "mock trial."
- 06/00 to 08/00     **Intern, The Honorable Brook Hedge**, District of Columbia Superior Court, 500 Indiana Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001  
**Duties:** Researched various legal issues; drafted memoranda to assist judge and law clerk with trials and orders.
- 08/98 to 06/99     **Social Studies Teacher, Anne Arundel County Public Schools**, Glen Burnie High School, 7550 B&A Blvd., Glen Burnie, MD 21060  
**Duties:** Taught Social Studies grades 9-11 for "Maryland's Tomorrow" drop-out prevention program.
- 08/93 to 06/98     **Social Studies Teacher, Broward County Public Schools**, 600 S.E. 3rd Ave., Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33301, Ramblewood Middle School; Tequesta Trace Middle School; South Plantation High School  
**Duties:** Taught Social Studies grades 7-12; Team Leader; Faculty Council Member; Co-chair of School Improvement Team (drafted School Improvement Plan); soccer and track coach.
- 08/91-06/93     **Social Studies Teacher, Pittsburgh Public Schools**, 341 South Bellefield Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15213, Perry Traditional Academy; Taylor-Allderdice High School (intern teacher); Schenley High School (student teacher)  
**Duties:** Taught Social Studies grades 9-11; school newspaper advisor.

**References:**

- E. Desmond Hogan, Partner, Hogan & Hartson, LLP, 555 13th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20004 (202) 637-5493
- The Honorable Brook Hedge, Judge, D.C. Superior Court, 500 Indiana Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001 (202) 879-1010
- Edward J. Marko, General Counsel, The School Board of Broward County, 600 S.E. 3rd Ave., 11th Floor, Ft. Lauderdale, FL (754) 321-2050 *\*please do not contact current employer until discussed*

## AGREEMENT

THIS AGREEMENT dated this 21<sup>st</sup> day of November, 2006, by and between THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA, hereinafter referred to as the "BOARD," and MARY S. LAWSON, hereinafter referred to as "LAWSON;"

### WITNESSETH

WHEREAS, pursuant to a written Agreement between the BOARD and JULIEANN RICO, hereafter referred to as the BOARD ATTORNEY, the "BOARD ATTORNEY" is responsible for the selection, hiring and supervision of such additional attorneys as may be necessary for the proper handling of the work of the BOARD; and pursuant to said Agreement each such additional attorney is to be employed by the BOARD; and

WHEREAS, the said BOARD ATTORNEY desires that LAWSON be employed as ASSOCIATE ATTORNEY – ACADEMIC PROGRAMS, and LAWSON desires to accept such employment subject to all the provisions of the said Agreement between the BOARD and the BOARD ATTORNEY;

NOW, THEREFORE, the parties hereto agree as follows:

1. The BOARD agrees to employ LAWSON as ASSOCIATE ATTORNEY – ACADEMIC PROGRAMS at an annual salary of ONE HUNDRED TWENTY THOUSAND and 00/100 (\$120,000.00) Dollars, payable in biweekly installments, for the period from January 8, 2007 to January 7, 2009, subject to increase as the BOARD, the BOARD ATTORNEY, and LAWSON may agree.

1A. The parties acknowledge and agree that LAWSON 's employment hereunder shall be subject to a 60-day initial probationary period, during which this Employment Agreement may be terminated at the sole discretion of the BOARD ATTORNEY upon written notice to LAWSON.

2. In addition to the compensation herein above provided, LAWSON shall be entitled to participate in such insurance and retirement plans and other fringe benefits as may be available from time to time to the managerial exempt employees of the BOARD, and shall be entitled to reimbursement for travel and related expenses according to applicable law and BOARD Rules and regulations.

3. The duties and assignments of LAWSON as ASSOCIATE ATTORNEY – ACADEMIC PROGRAMS shall include the responsibilities as set forth in the Job Description for ASSOCIATE ATTORNEY – ACADEMIC PROGRAMS, as amended from time to time, and the performance of such other duties and assignments as the BOARD ATTORNEY shall direct. In the conduct of her duties, she shall be fully and solely responsible and accountable to the BOARD ATTORNEY.

4. LAWSON agrees to devote her full time and efforts to the performance of her duties and responsibilities as ASSOCIATE ATTORNEY – ACADEMIC PROGRAMS and further agrees not to accept or perform any legal services for any client other than the BOARD which may in any way conflict with the legal business of the BOARD or with her duties and responsibilities as such ASSOCIATE ATTORNEY – ACADEMIC PROGRAMS.

5. This Contract may be terminated at the option of the BOARD ATTORNEY or LAWSON on thirty (30) days' written notice to the BOARD and to the BOARD ATTORNEY, or to LAWSON, as the case may be, it being understood that except as so provided, the said LAWSON 's

right to employment shall be subject to the BOARD ATTORNEY'S absolute right to terminate this Agreement at will.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the parties hereto have hereunto signed their names and affixed their seals at Miami-Dade County, Florida, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of November 2006.

ATTEST:

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE  
COUNTY, FLORIDA

\_\_\_\_\_  
Rudolph F. Crew, Ed.D., Secretary

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Agustin J. Barrera, Chairman

By: Mary S. Lawson  
Mary S. Lawson

Approved as to Form:

\_\_\_\_\_  
JulieAnn Rico  
School Board Attorney

## MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

### JOB DESCRIPTION

#### IDENTIFICATION INFORMATION

- |                           |                                       |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. JOB TITLE:             | Associate Attorney, Academic Programs |
| 2. DEPARTMENT:            | Board Attorney's Office               |
| 3. IMMEDIATE SUPERVISOR:  | School Board Attorney                 |
| 4. PAY GRADE:             | (Contract)                            |
| 5. JOB CODE:              | TBA                                   |
| 6. BARGAINING UNIT:       | 6                                     |
| 7. DATE OF LAST REVISION: | June 19, 2006                         |
| 8. POSITION AUTHORIZED:   | Board Item G-1, August 2, 2006        |
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#### OCCUPATIONAL SUMMARY

Works at the direction of the Senior Attorney for Academic Programs; provides legal advice and represents the School Board in the areas of academic programs/contracts, student truancy, expulsions, and disciplinary matters, Exceptional Student Education, student records, custody issues, charter schools, and the Safe School Program.

#### EXAMPLE OF DUTIES

1. Provides legal advice and represents the School Board in the areas of academic programs/contracts, student truancy, expulsions, and disciplinary matters, Exceptional Student Education, student records, custody issues, charter schools, and the Safe School Program.
2. Assists the School Board Attorney on all legal matters as assigned.
3. Performs legal research and prepares legal opinions.
4. Assists in drafting, reviewing, or updating to Board policies.
5. Recommends changes in policies and procedures to ensure compliance with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations.
6. Provides legal advice and support to principals, school centers, area offices, and departments within the academic areas to effectively implement all pertinent policies.
7. Provides legal representation in litigation matters, disputes, and claims filed by and against the District relative to academic and student related issues.

8. Reviews, drafts, and negotiates contracts and agreements for academic programs or other related matters.
9. Follows adopted policies and procedures in accordance with School Board priorities.
10. Conducts oneself in the best interest of students, in accordance with the highest traditions of public education and in support of the District's Mission Statement.
11. Must be willing to cross-train and provide legal support in other practice areas as assigned by the School Board Attorney.

### **PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS**

This work requires the following physical activities: mobility, twisting, reaching, sitting, standing, lifting, finger dexterity, grasping, repetitive motions, talking, hearing, and visual acuity. The work is performed primarily indoors.

### **MINIMUM QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS**

1. Law degree from accredited law school.
2. Member in good standing of The Florida Bar.
3. Demonstrated ability to communicate the law to others and to successfully manage and supervise employees.
4. Demonstrated ability to work with diverse groups and effectively communicate both orally and in writing.