

Educational Institutions

Overview

Now more than ever, educational institutions must navigate a continually shifting landscape of local, state and national laws and regulations governing everything from labor and employment matters and construction projects to real estate transactions and financing. Schiff Hardin offers clients the thoughtful, insightful and effective guidance they need to overcome these pressing challenges.

A Full-Spectrum Practice

We have the depth of experience, technical knowledge, clear-eyed perspective and solid understanding of the way the academic world works to help our clients fulfill their missions to deliver the entire range of pre-school through graduate level educational services.

As trusted advisors and staunch advocates for our educational institution clients, our first job is to listen carefully. By fully comprehending the complexities and nuances of the issues facing our clients, we are able to speak directly to the issues that matter with strategically appropriate and effective solutions.

We have represented not only leading colleges and universities and private elementary and secondary schools, but also public school districts, for-profit educational companies, and sponsors of private-public sponsorships.

Additionally, Schiff Hardin has represented numerous institutions of higher education, government issuers, investment banks and commercial banks in public financings for universities and other educational institutions. We also represent educational institutions in connection with bank loans, lines of credit, commercial paper programs and derivatives.

Labor and Employment

Many of our clients turn to us for labor and employment counseling on all aspects of employer-employee relations. We not only provide employment and collective bargaining advice, but we also provide guidance on student-faculty and student-university issues. We represent college and university administrations in promotion and tenure-related disputes. Additionally, we help educational institutions comply with their obligations as federal contractors and negotiate a variety of vendor, procurement and telecommunications system installation contracts.

Facilities Improvements

Educational institutions are under constant pressure to upgrade, improve and expand their facilities. Our guidance in this area includes counsel on:

- Construction contracts
- Real estate transactions
- Zoning and land use
- Real estate tax exemptions
- Proprietary power plants
- Governmental relations
- Real estate tax exemptions

Financing

Schiff Hardin attorneys are nationally recognized public finance bond counsel and have acted as counsel to elementary and secondary schools and institutions of higher education with respect to their financing needs. We advise them on long-term taxable and tax-exempt financings and short-term loans, lines of credit and commercial paper programs. We are experienced in providing legal advice and counsel on the unique funding needs of educational institutions. We also provide legal advice concerning endowment investments, tax counsel on planned giving programs and advice on real estate donations.

Litigation

We often are called on to help educational institutions resolve disputes, both in and out of the courtroom. Our team is particularly well equipped to handle litigation involving bequests, medical research, tenure issues, employment discrimination claims, whistleblower and intellectual property litigation involving faculty members.

Experience

- Schiff Hardin represented clients in financings for private secondary schools, colleges and universities such as Northwestern University; The University of Chicago; St. Xavier University; Knox College; The Latin School of Chicago; and others.
- We represent The Regents of the University of California on a broad range of matters, including class action civil rights litigation, intellectual property and academic affairs disputes, and public records litigation. We have represented the University of California in trial courts and on appeal, including wins before the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals and the California Supreme Court.
- We represent a number of our education clients in connection with bank loans and lines of credit, commercial paper programs and derivatives.
- In representing university clients in tenure-related issues, we have resolved and prevailed in disputes without litigation.
- We have successfully conducted sensitive internal investigations for a number of our education clients.
- We represented a Chicago-based educational institution in the acquisition of several properties to be used for expansion of its Chicago-loop area campus, and the acquisition of several multi-family properties to be converted to student housing.
- We represented a Chicago-based educational institution in the sale of an underused campus building and ground lease of the land to a real estate developer who upgraded the facility and leased it to business incubators.
- We represented a Chicago-based educational institution in the acceptance of a donation of real estate used to construct a suburban campus building
- Our team represented a Chicago-based educational institution in ground leasing underutilized vacant real estate near its campus to a developer who constructed a condominium and townhome development on the property, some of which were sold to employees and faculty members working at the educational institution.
- We represented a Chicago-based educational institution in connection with the financing of a new state-of-the art campus student center and new student dormitory building.

AWARDS & HONORS

- **BTI “Innovation Builder”**

We were singled out by corporate counsel as one of only 28 percent of law firms clients view as a BTI “Innovation Builder,” which recognizes firms that bring change to the legal market through new technology, services, strategies, or structures.