

ATKINSON, ANDELSON, LOYA, RUUD & ROMO

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OUR FILE NUMBER:
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July 13, 2021

VIA EMAIL & FIRST CLASS MAIL
[aghilyw@mdusd.org]

Wendy Aghily, Ed.D.
Mount Diablo Unified School District
1936 Carlotta Drive
Concord, CA 94519

Re: 2021-2024 Agreement for Special Services

Dear Dr. Aghily:

Enclosed is our proposed agreement between AALRR and the Mount Diablo Unified School Services for continued legal services for the terms July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2024. We would appreciate your presenting the enclosed agreement to the Board as soon as possible.

We look forward to continuing our work with the District in the future. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Very truly yours,

ATKINSON, ANDELSON, LOYA,
RUUD & ROMO



Elizabeth A. Estes

EAE:jcf
Enclosure
cc: Cesar Alvarado, Associate General Counsel (via email)

AGREEMENT FOR SPECIAL SERVICES

I. PARTIES

This Agreement for Special Services (“Agreement”) is entered into by and between the law firm of ATKINSON, ANDELSON, LOYA, RUUD & ROMO, a professional corporation, hereinafter referred to as the “Law Firm” and, MOUNT DIABLO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT, hereinafter referred to as “District.”

II. PURPOSE

The District desires to retain and engage Law Firm to perform legal and, upon request, non-legal consultant services on the District’s behalf. Law Firm accepts this engagement on the terms and conditions contained in this Agreement.

III. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

A. Fees for Services

1. Standard Hourly Rate Services

District agrees to pay the Law Firm at the following standard hourly rates:

Partners	\$310
Of Counsel	\$295
Associates	\$285
Paralegals/Legal Assistants	\$180

These rates will increase by \$5 per hour effective July 1, 2022 and \$5.00 per hour effective July 1, 2023.

2. Fixed Fee Services

District agrees to pay the Law Firm a fixed fee for the following services:

A full day of training (up to 8 hours)	\$5,000
A half day of training (up to 4 hours)	\$4,000
A two-hour training	\$3,000
A one-hour training	\$2,000

3. Fee Arrangements for Specialized Legal Services

For specialized litigation and transactional services in the areas of construction, procurement, technology, prevailing wage, real property, CEQA, mitigation negotiations, school and college finance, tax, bankruptcy, copyright, non-profit organizations, immigration and appellate law, the District agrees to pay Law Firm at rates higher than the standard hourly rates for special projects or particular scopes of work. The Law Firm shall inform the District of the rates for specialized services and the Superintendent or designee shall agree to such rates in writing prior to any billings for specialized legal services by the Law Firm.

4. Costs and Expenses

In addition to the fees described above, the District agrees to pay a three percent (3%) “administrative fee” calculated and based on the total monthly billed fees to cover certain operating expenses of the Law Firm incurred in providing services to the District. This administrative fee is in lieu of charging the District for Westlaw, photocopies, automobile mileage, parking, facsimiles, telephone, document preparation, and postage.

Costs relating to fees charged by third parties retained to perform services ancillary to the Law Firm’s representation of District are not included in the administrative fee and are charged separately. These include, but are not limited to, deposition and court reporter fees, transcript costs, witness fees (including expert witnesses), process server fees, and other similar third party fees. The Law Firm shall not be obligated to advance costs on behalf of the District; however, for purposes of convenience and in order to expedite matters, the Law Firm reserves the right to advance costs on behalf of the District with the prior approval of the Superintendent or designee in the event a particular cost item exceeds \$2,000.00 in amount, and without the prior approval of the Superintendent or designee in the event a particular cost item totals \$2,000.00 or less.

If the Law Firm retains, with authorization from the District, experts or outside consultants for the benefit of the District, rather than the District contracting directly with any expert or outside consultant, the District agrees to pay a five percent (5%) “consultant processing fee” in addition to the actual costs paid by the Law Firm to the expert or outside consultant in order to offset related costs to the Law Firm resulting from administering and initially paying such expert and outside consultant fees on behalf of the District. This fee shall not apply to the services of Law Firm-provided non-legal consultants as set forth in paragraph F., below.

B. Billing Practices

1. A detailed description of the work performed and the costs and expenses advanced by the Law Firm will be prepared on a monthly basis as of the last day of the month and will be mailed to the District on or about the 15th of the following month, unless other arrangements are made. Payment of the full amount due, as reflected on the monthly statement, will be due to the Law Firm from the District by the 10th of the month following delivery of the statement, unless other arrangements are made. In the event that there are funds of the District in the Law Firm’s Trust Account at the time a monthly billing statement is prepared, funds will be transferred from the Law Firm’s Trust Account to the Law Firm’s General Account to the extent of the balance due on the monthly statement and a credit will be reflected on the monthly

statement. Any balance of fees or costs advanced remaining unpaid for a period of 60 days will be subject to a 1% per month service charge.

2. The Law Firm shall bill in one-quarter hour increments.

3. Certain tasks shall be billed at established minimum time increments. These include: (a) telephone conference (.25 hour), (b) electronic correspondence (.25 hour), (c) standard written correspondence (.50 hour), (d) provide a document (.50 hour).

4. The Law Firm may charge the full hourly rate to more than one client for services provided concurrently during the same time period. For example, in the course of traveling to the District or while providing legal services at the District, it may be necessary for the Law Firm to provide billable services to other clients.

5. District agrees to review the Law Firm's monthly statements promptly upon receipt and to notify the Law Firm, in writing, with respect to any disagreement with the monthly statement. Failure to communicate written disagreement with the Law Firm's monthly statement within thirty (30) days of the District's receipt thereof shall be deemed to signify the District's agreement that the monthly billing statement accurately reflects the services performed; and the proper charge for those services.

6. After the conclusion of a particular engagement (e.g., an investigation) should a need arise for the Firm to respond to any subpoena or discovery, to provide testimony at deposition, trial or arbitration, or to otherwise perform services with respect to any matter relating to or arising out of that engagement, the District shall compensate the Firm at its then applicable rates for time expended, including all required preparation time.

C. Termination of Representation on a Particular Matter

The Law Firm reserves the right to discontinue the performance of legal services on behalf of the District on a particular matter upon the occurrence of any one or more of the following events:

1. Upon order of a court of law requiring the Law Firm to discontinue the performance of legal services;

2. Upon a determination by the Law Firm in the exercise of its reasonable and sole discretion, that state or federal legal ethical principles require it to discontinue the performance of legal services;

3. Upon a failure of the District to perform any of the District's obligations with respect to the payment of the Law Firm's fees, costs or expenses as reflected on the monthly bill;

4. Upon a failure of the District to perform any of the District's obligations with respect to the duty of cooperation with the Law Firm in connection with the Law Firm's representation of the District.

In the event that the Law Firm ceases to perform services for the District on a matter, the District agrees that it will promptly pay to the Law Firm any and all unpaid fees and costs advanced, and retrieve all of its files, signing a receipt therefor. Further, the District agrees that, with respect to any litigation where the Law Firm has made an appearance in a court of law on its behalf, the District will promptly execute an appropriate Substitution of Attorney form. Any termination of Law Firm's representation on such a matter may be subject to approval by the applicable court of law.

D. Consent to Joint Representation

The District acknowledges that from time to time Law Firm may be asked to perform legal services on a matter affecting two or more public education local agencies. In such situations before proceeding with representation, Law Firm shall seek separate written consent to joint representation from all involved parties if permissible according to ethical principles applicable to attorneys. The District acknowledges that it is often in the best interest of the District for such representation to commence without undue delay which may result from waiting until a regularly-scheduled Board meeting. Therefore, pursuant to Education Code section 7, the Governing Board of the District hereby delegates to the Superintendent or designee authority to consent to joint representation in the circumstances described in this paragraph.

E. Client Cooperation

The District agrees to fully cooperate with the Law Firm in connection with the Law Firm's representation of the District, including but not limited to, attending mandatory court hearings and other appearances, making its employees and officials available, and providing accurate information documentation necessary to enable the Law Firm to adequately represent the District.

F. Services Performed by Law Firm-Provided Non-Legal Consultants

The Law Firm has an affiliation with non-legal consultants who are available to provide services in areas including, but not limited to, personnel/business office audits, human resources/collective bargaining consultation, special education consultation, public/employee relations surveys and communications, media and public relations, budget analysis/support services, instructional coaching/counseling at school improvement sites, leadership coaching, board/superintendent relations and best practices, and interim management placement.

Because the Law Firm has a financial interest in the District's use of these affiliated non-legal consultants, the rules of the State Bar of California require that the District provide its informed written consent to this arrangement to prior to utilizing these services. Execution of this Agreement shall be deemed "informed consent" for the purpose of this paragraph. The District is hereby advised that it may seek the advice of an independent attorney of your choice prior to providing such written consent.

Please also be advised that because the services of these non-legal consultants are provided to the District outside of the attorney-client relationship, communications with these non-legal consultants will not be protected from disclosure by the attorney-client privilege.

G. Consent to Law Firm Communication

As part of our commitment to client service, the Law Firm will send the District periodic alerts on case developments and legislative changes, and notices of breakfast briefings, conferences, and other training opportunities designed to help the District with daily legal concerns. The Law Firm will send those and other additional service notices to the District via regular mail and/or electronic mail at the email address which you designate or the email used in your daily communications with us. By execution of this Agreement, the District and designated contact(s) consent to receive such communications by electronic mail subject to the right to unsubscribe at any time.

H. Identification of Insurance Coverage

With respect to insurance coverage for any matters covered by the scope of services under this Agreement, you agree that it is your own responsibility, rather than the Law Firm's responsibility, to identify potential insurance coverage and to tender legal matters to any appropriate insurance companies that may insure you. If you desire that the Law Firm become involved in identifying potential insurers and/or the tender of legal disputes, then a separate written agreement between you and the Law Firm to that effect will be required.

I. Miscellaneous

1. The Law Firm maintains errors and omissions insurance coverage applicable to the services to be rendered.

2. The parties agree that the Law Firm, while engaged in carrying out and complying with any of the terms and conditions of this Agreement, is an independent contractor and is not an employee of the District.

3. After a file on a matter is closed, the District has a right to request the Law Firm to return the file to the District. Absent such a request, the Law Firm shall retain the file on the District's behalf.

IV. BINDING ARBITRATION

If any dispute arises out of, or related to, a claimed breach of this agreement, the professional services rendered by attorneys, or any other disagreement of any nature, type, or description, regardless of the facts or the legal theories which may be involved, including attorney malpractice, breach of fiduciary duty, misrepresentation, or conflict of interest, such dispute shall be resolved by confidential and binding arbitration upon the written request of one party after service of that request on the other party.

There are significant advantages and disadvantages of binding arbitration. The parties shall agree on an arbitrator with special skills and experience to hear and determine the dispute unlike in a court proceeding where a judge is assigned. If the parties cannot agree, then the Superior Court of Los Angeles County shall choose an impartial arbitrator whose decision shall be final and conclusive on all matters.

The parties shall each have the right of discovery in accordance with Code of Civil Procedure Section 1283. Arbitrations conducted pursuant to this agreement permit the same discovery rights as in a court proceeding. Each party shall bear their own costs and attorney fees, including payments to the arbitrator which can be significantly more costly than the filing fee in Court proceedings where costs may be awarded to the prevailing party. Each party to this agreement waives and therefore gives up important constitutional rights in arbitration as the arbitrator's decision is final. There is no right to appeal to challenge any errors made in the arbitration proceeding. Unlike court proceedings, arbitration proceedings are conducted privately and the outcome will remain confidential. There is no right to a trial by a judge or jury of one's peers. There is no limitation on the type of monetary damage that can be awarded by the arbitrator. The client is advised that the client has the right to have an independent lawyer of client's choice review this arbitration provision.

V. DURATION


This Agreement shall commence July 1, 2021 and terminate on June 30, 2024 and shall thereafter continue from month to month at the then current rate schedules until modified in writing by agreement between the Law Firm and the District up to a maximum of five (5) years duration per Education Code section 17596.

Either the District or the Law Firm may terminate this Agreement on thirty (30) days' written notice.

"Law Firm"

ATKINSON, ANDELSON, LOYA, RUUD &
ROMO

Dated: July 13, 2021

By: 
Elizabeth A. Estes

"District"

MOUNT DIABLO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Dated: _____

By: _____
Adam Clark, Ed.D., Superintendent