

# Brooks Pierce Attorneys Successfully Advocate for Public Schools

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Brooks Pierce attorneys Bob King, Jill Wilson, and Elizabeth Troutman recently secured favorable rulings in two different lawsuits on behalf of public boards of education.

On June 10, summary judgment was entered in favor of the Beaufort County Board of Education. The Beaufort County Board had withdrawn from participation in a regional school, NERSBA (Northeast Regional School of Biotechnology and Agriscience), and NERSBA filed suit alleging that such withdrawal was not authorized by the enabling legislation. The statute at issue had never been litigated before. The crux of King and Troutman's argument was that NERSBA had failed to deliver on its promise to provide an innovative STEM program for Beaufort County students and the Board had the discretion to act in the best interest of its students. The Superior Court agreed and validated the Board's decision.

Similarly, summary judgment was entered in favor of the City of Greenville and the Pitt County Board of Education in a matter involving Greenville's red light camera program. The plaintiff brought suit arguing that the legislation authorizing the City of Greenville and the Pitt County Board of Education to enter into a cost-sharing agreement for the red light camera program violated the North Carolina Constitution's prohibition on local acts relating to health. King and Troutman argued "health" does not include traffic safety or contracts between local governments. The three judge panel in Wake County agreed, granting summary judgment in favor of the City of Greenville and the Pitt County Board of Education on June 25.

King has more than 30 years of experience in a variety of litigation matters and education law, and has been widely recognized as a leading litigator and trusted advisor by his clients and peers. He serves as the firm's General Counsel. He is a Fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers and the American Bar Foundation, and was recognized as a "Litigation Star" by *Benchmark Litigation* for General Commercial in 2019.

Wilson represents numerous public school boards of education, private educational institutions, and colleges and universities on a wide range of education issues and in litigation in state and federal trial and appellate courts. She has advised and/or litigated on all aspects of education and the business of education, including school board mergers,

policy generation, funding disputes, civil rights issues, student conduct issues, school assignment, teacher tenure and dismissal, general employment, personal injury, construction and public contracting, and First Amendment issues.

Troutman advises public school boards of education, private educational institutions, colleges and universities on a wide range of education issues, and litigates on behalf of educational institutions in state and federal courts. She is a member of the executive committee of the North Carolina Council of School Attorneys, and was recognized in 2019 as one of the *Triad Business Journals* "40 Leaders Under Forty."