

PLACER COUNTY SCHOOL BOARDS OF TRUSTEES REMUNERATION

Background/Summary

There are 21 School Districts of various sizes and coverage within Placer County. Many are small and some quite large. The Placer County Office of Education encompasses the entire County and Sierra Community College serves both Placer and Nevada County.

The 2000-2001 Placer County Grand Jury conducted a comparison of the School Districts Trustee remuneration of the County. The Placer County Board of Education furnished the data for this report comparison.

The Grand Jury found that many Trustees¹ of these various School Districts serve their electors and their charge without any stipend² or benefits while some Trustees receive remuneration varying by district from \$40 to \$400 per month for their serving on the School Board.

Until preempted by California State law, some School Districts were also paying retirement benefits for Trustees into the California Personnel Employees Retirement System (CalPERS). As School District Trustees are not regular employees with employment rights, they are not eligible for retirement benefits.

The Grand Jury recognizes that there are personal sacrifices of both time and expenses for each Trustee, but urges that each School District review its District's remuneration policy. The review should include input from the public.

Discussion

There are 21 School Districts of various sizes located in Placer County. Districts range from Kindergarten through 8th grade (K-8), larger union districts K-8, a high school union district, consolidated districts Kindergarten through high school, the Placer County Office of Education that encompasses the County, and Sierra Community College District that serves both Placer and Nevada Counties.

Attached as Exhibit 1 is the California Education Code § 35120-35124 regarding stipends. Comparisons of remuneration of School Boards of Trustees are attached for references as Exhibit 2 (January 1999) and Exhibit 3 (April 2001) of this report. The California Education Code does not specify whether compensation for School Board Trustees includes benefits and miscellaneous expense reimbursements (e.g. voice mail, mileage, etc.).

¹ A Trustee is defined as "one to whom anything is entrusted; one to whom the management of property is committed in trust for the benefits of others."

² A stipend is defined as "a sum of money paid periodically for services to defray expenses." Stipends are allowed, but not mandated, under California Education Code § 35120.

Additionally, many districts also pay medical benefits for their Trustees, and in some cases, Trustee dependents. Depending on the district, other benefits may include money for “voice mail,” life insurance, mileage, and miscellaneous expenses.

In 1999, 12 School Districts paid no stipend to its Trustees while nine paid anywhere from \$20 to \$300 per month. Currently, 11 School Districts pay remuneration from \$40 to \$400 per month while 10 still do not.

Trustees of eight School Districts were receiving medical benefits in 1999 ranging from \$4,579.20 to \$7,240.80 per Trustee per year. As of May 2001, the amounts range from \$2,160³ to \$8,583 per each elected Trustee.

It is noted that 10⁴ Trustees of School Districts that allow medical benefits at their School District’s expense decline those benefits.

Additionally, four out of five Trustees in one⁵ School District have declined to receive a stipend at their School District’s expense.

Some School Districts in the past paid retirement benefits for each of its Trustees into the California Personnel Employees Retirement System (CalPERS) until California Law halted that practice. As School Trustees are not regular employees, they are not eligible for the retirement benefits.

The Grand Jury found disparity of stipends and benefits in the various County School Districts. The historical roots of serving as a Trustee of a School District saw Trustees serving “for the benefit of others” albeit the School District. Many Trustees continue that practice, while some derive some monetary benefits for their services. These benefits vary greatly. Attached, as Exhibits 1 and 2 are tables showing the benefits by District.

When the costs of the monthly stipend and yearly medical benefits are totaled and averaged for one District meeting twice a month it averages \$1,000 per month, or \$500 each Trustee per meeting. For another School District that meets once a month, it is almost \$800 per Trustee.

The Grand Jury commends the Trustees that continue to serve without remuneration in the School Districts of Ackerman Elementary, Colfax Elementary, Eureka Union Elementary, Foresthill Union Elementary, Loomis Union Elementary, Newcastle Elementary, and Penryn Elementary.

Additionally, the four Trustees who decline stipends for their service in one School District, and 10 Trustees who decline medical benefits for their service in five School Districts are commended for their donated services.

³ Dry Creek Joint Unified amounts per each Trustee decreased from \$4,579.00 in 1999 to \$2,160.00.

⁴ Placer County Office of Education (1), Placer Hills (2), Placer Union (1), Rocklin (5), and Roseville Joint (1).

⁵ Ophir Elementary. Ophir also allows each Trustee to enroll in the District’s medical benefits but the Trustee must pay the cost to the District.

Finding

The 2000-2001 Placer County Grand Jury finds that Trustees of some School Districts have and are voting themselves stipends and benefits that vary in scope and size.

Recommendation

The Grand Jury recommends that the respective School District Boards of Trustees of Placer County review their compensation policies at well publicized meetings after a request for public input into whether or not the community served by the School District supports the current remuneration policies of its elected School Board of Trustees.

Respondents

Superintendent, Placer County Office of Education

School Boards of:

Ackerman Elementary
Alta-Dutch Flat
Auburn Union Elementary
Colfax Elementary
Dry Creek Joint Elementary
Emigrant Gap
Eureka Union
Foresthill Union
Loomis Union
Newcastle Elementary
Ophir Elementary
Penryn
Placer Hills Union
Placer Union High School
Rocklin Unified
Roseville City
Roseville Joint Union High School
Sierra Joint Community College District
Tahoe-Truckee Unified
Western Placer Unified

RESPONSE REQUIRED WITHIN 90 DAYS TO:

The Honorable James D. Garbolino
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
County of Placer
Historic Court House
101 Maple Street
Auburn, CA 95603

2000-2001 Placer County Grand Jury

CALIFORNIA CODES
EDUCATION CODE
SECTION 35120-35124

35120. (a) (1) In any school district in which the average daily attendance for the prior school year exceeded 400,000, each member of the city board of education or the governing board of the district who actually attends all meetings held may receive as compensation for his or her services a sum not to exceed two thousand dollars (\$2,000) per month.

(2) In any school district that is not located in a city and county, and in which the average daily attendance for the prior school year exceeded 60,000, the governing board may prescribe, as compensation for the services of each member of the board who actually attends all meetings held, a sum not to exceed one thousand five hundred dollars (\$1,500) in any month.

(3) In any school district in which the average daily attendance for the prior school year was 60,000, or less, but more than 25,000, each member of the city board of education or the governing board of the district who actually attends all meetings held may receive as compensation for his or her services a sum not to exceed seven hundred fifty dollars (\$750) in any month.

(4) In any school district in which the average daily attendance for the prior school year was 25,000, or less, but more than 10,000, each member of the city board of education or the governing board of the district who actually attends all meetings held may receive as compensation for his or her services a sum not to exceed four hundred dollars (\$400) in any month.

(5) In any school district in which the average daily attendance for the prior school year was 10,000 or less but more than 1,000, each member of the city board of education or the governing board of the district who actually attends all meetings held may receive as compensation for his or her services a sum not to exceed two hundred forty dollars (\$240) in any month.

(6) In any school district in which the average daily attendance for the prior school year was 1,000 or less but more than 150, each member of the city board of education or the governing board of the district who actually attends all meetings held may receive as compensation for his or her services a sum not to exceed one hundred twenty dollars (\$120) in any month.

(7) In any school district in which the average daily attendance for the prior school year was less than 150, each member of the city board of education or the governing board of the district who actually attends all meetings held may receive as compensation for his or her services a sum not to exceed sixty dollars (\$60) per month.

(8) Any member who does not attend all meetings held in any month may receive, as compensation for his or her services, an amount not greater than the maximum amount allowed by this subdivision divided by the number of meetings held and multiplied by the number of meetings actually attended.

(9) For the purposes of providing compensation pursuant to paragraphs (1) to (7), inclusive, average daily attendance for the prior school year may be increased by a school district's percentage of excused absences reported for the 1996-97 fiscal year.

(b) The compensation of members of the governing board of a school district newly organized or reorganized shall be governed by subdivision (a). For this purpose, the total average daily attendance in all of the schools of the district in the school year in which the organization or reorganization became effective pursuant

EXHIBIT 1, PAGE 1 OF 2

to Section 4062 shall be deemed to be the average daily attendance in the district for the prior school year.

(c) A member may be paid for any meeting when absent if the board by resolution duly adopted and included in its minutes finds that at the time of the meeting he or she is performing services outside the meeting for the school district or districts, he or she was ill or on jury duty, or the absence was due to a hardship deemed acceptable by the board.

(d) The compensation shall be a charge against the funds of the school district. If the city board of education or the governing board of the district is the governing board of more than one school district, the compensation shall be charged against and paid by the respective school districts in the same proportion as the salary of the city superintendent of schools is charged against them. Compensation shall be reduced by an amount equal to any salary or compensation paid to the members of the city board of education from any funds of the city.

35121. In any school district organized under the provisions of Section 35502 and which is also a high school district, and which districts are governed by a board of school trustees, and which districts have an average daily attendance in the elementary school district of at least 800, as shown by the last report of the principal of schools in the elementary school district, on file in the office of the county superintendent of schools, the trustees of the school district may appoint a clerk, who shall not be one of their own number, to act for the elementary district trustees and the high school district trustees to hold office at the pleasure of the board of trustees. The board may fix the salary of the clerk at a sum not exceeding twenty-five dollars (\$25) per month for the two districts, which shall be paid in the same manner and from the same funds as other incidental expenses of the districts are paid.

35124. The superintendent of schools of a unified school district that is coterminous with the boundaries of a city and county shall have all the powers and duties set forth in this code for a superintendent of any school district of the class of school that is included within the unified school district and also shall perform the duties of the county superintendent. The superintendent shall have his or her compensation fixed and ordered paid by the board of education, anything in a city, county, or city and county charter to the contrary notwithstanding.

EXHIBIT 1, PAGE 2 OF 2

**PLACER COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER SURVEY
JANUARY 1999**

SCHOOL DISTRICT	STIPEND YES/NO	AMOUNT OF STIPEND PER MONTH	MEETINGS PER MONTH	BENEFITS YES/NO	ANNUAL COST OF BENEFITS PER MEMBER
Placer County Office of Education	YES	\$300	1	YES	Health & Dental – cost dependent on plan selected
Ackerman	NO			NO	
Alta-Dutch Flat	YES	\$ 60	1	NO	
Auburn Union	NO			YES	\$6,338 Health, Dental, Vision
Colfax	NO			NO	
Dry Creek Joint	NO	\$180		YES	\$4,579 Health, Dental, Vision
Emigrant Gap	NO	\$ 60		NO	
Eureka Union	NO			NO	
Foresthill Union	NO			NO	
Loomis Union	NO			NO	
Newcastle Elementary	NO			NO	
Ophir Elementary	YES	\$ 40	1	YES	Board members pay the cost
Penryn Elementary	NO				
Placer Hills	NO			YES	Up to \$5,923 Health, Dental, Vision
Placer Union High	YES	\$240	2	YES	\$5,299 Health, Dental, Vision
Rocklin Unified	YES	\$240	2	NO	
Roseville City	YES	\$100	2	NO	
Roseville Joint Union	YES	\$ 20	2	YES	\$5,591 Health, Dental, Vision
Sierra College	YES	\$400	2	YES	\$5,000 (estimated) Health, Dental, Vision
Tahoe-Truckee Unified	NO			YES	\$7,241 Health, Dental, Vision
Western Placer Unified	YES	\$240	2	NO	

EXHIBIT 2

**PLACER COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER SURVEY
APRIL 2001**

SCHOOL DISTRICT	NUMBER OF MEMBERS	STIPEND YES/NO	AMOUNT OF STIPEND PER MONTH	MEETINGS PER MONTH	BENEFITS YES/NO	ANNUAL COST OF BENEFITS PER MEMBER
Placer County Office of Education	7	YES	\$300	1	YES	\$5,895 - \$6,003 for Medical (includes dependents); \$2,000 for Travel & Conferences
Ackerman	5	NO			NO	\$750 for Conferences
Alta-Dutch Flat	5	YES	\$ 80	1	NO	
Auburn Union	5	NO			YES	Average \$7,741 for Medical; includes dependents
Colfax	5	NO			NO	
Dry Creek Joint	5	NO			YES	\$2,160 for Medical; \$569 for VoiceMail
Emigrant Gap	3	NO			NO	
Eureka Union	5	NO			NO	\$100 for mileage Approximately \$250 for Meetings/Conferences
Foresthill Union	5	NO			NO	
Loomis Union	5	NO			NO	
Newcastle Elementary	5	NO			NO	
Ophir Elementary	5	YES	\$ 40	1	YES	\$100 Mileage for Conferences
Penryn Elementary	5	NO				Pay for Conferences out of Administration
Placer Hills	5	NO			YES	\$6,223 for Medical; includes dependents
Placer Union High	5	YES	\$120	2	YES	\$5,036 for Medical; includes dependents
Rocklin Unified	5	YES	\$180	2	NO	\$500 for Mileage; \$500 for Misc Expenses
Roseville City	5	YES	\$ 60	2	NO	\$100 for Mileage

EXHIBIT 3, PAGE 1 OF 2

**PLACER COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER SURVEY
APRIL 2001
(Continued)**

SCHOOL DISTRICT	NUMBER OF MEMBERS	STIPEND YES/NO	AMOUNT OF STIPEND PER MONTH	MEETINGS PER MONTH	BENEFITS YES/NO	ANNUAL COST OF BENEFITS PER MEMBER
Roseville Joint Union	5	YES	\$ 20	2	YES	Average \$2,837 for Medical; includes dependents
Sierra College	7	YES	\$240	2	YES	\$8,052 for Medical; includes dependents; \$375 for Mileage
Tahoe-Truckee Unified	5	NO			YES	\$8,583 for Medical; includes dependents; \$100 for Mileage to Conferences; \$250 for Life Insurance (\$50,000 policies)
Western Placer Unified	5	Yes	\$240	2	NO	

Comment:

While many of the School Districts stipend amounts did not change, it should be noted that several increased significantly in just 27 months. It should also be noted that some School Districts stipend amounts went down within the same time period.