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2010-2011 GRAND JURY RELEASES REPORT ON SCHOOL BOARD COMPENSATION

The San Joaquin County 2010-2011 Civil Grand Jury today released its report investigating School Board compensation in San Joaquin County K-12 schools. The report indicates that *“in this economic climate, financial prudence is expected of trustees in their governance role in public schools.”* The Grand Jury does not include any findings or recommendations in its report, as the report is informational in nature and is meant to provide the public with a means by which *“to compare their school board compensation to others in the county.”*

In the course of its investigation, the Grand Jury reviewed financial information supplied by the County Office of Education for all schools except Stockton Unified and Lodi Unified School Districts, which provided their own financial information. *“San Joaquin County has 15 school districts, including the County Office of Education.”* The County Office of Education also provided demographic information for all schools. Board Bylaws for each school district were also reviewed as *“health, dental, vision and life insurance benefits can be offered, per each district’s bylaws, at the board’s discretion.”*

The report *“describes the demographics of each school including: the number of schools in each district; enrollment as of March 15, 2011, number of trustees, their monthly stipend, the most (cap) the district allowed for health benefits per trustee, the total annual cost to the district, and the maximum potential compensation the district could have to pay. There were a variety of different*

costs to each district, as well as variations by trustee, depending on what each trustee opted to receive.”

The report concludes by highlighting the severe revenue shortfall for K-12 education across the state, which has induced such measures as lay-offs of staff and larger class sizes. *“Boards may wish to reduce or eliminate district paid benefits on their behalf. In addition, the public may wish to discuss trustee compensation with their Boards.”*

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(Copy of report attached)

San Joaquin County Grand Jury



SCHOOL BOARD COMPENSATION

2010/2011 San Joaquin County Grand Jury Case No. 1210

Summary

The Civil Grand Jury investigated School Board compensation in San Joaquin County K-12 Schools. In this economic climate, financial prudence is expected of trustees in their governance role in public schools. This report allows the public to compare their school board compensation to others in the county. The report is informational in nature and does not include any findings or recommendations.

Background

San Joaquin County has 15 school districts, including the County Office of Education. These districts are as diverse as a one school district in a remote section of the county, to a school district that is in a large city and has 59 schools. The State Board of Education determines how many trustees a district may have, as well as the maximum monthly stipend a board member can receive, depending on the number of students in the district (Ed. Code 35012). Board members are empowered to set their own stipend (Ed. Code 35120). In addition, health, dental, vision and life insurance benefits can be offered, per each district's bylaws, at the board's discretion.

Method of Investigation

The Grand Jury contacted the County Office of Education, Stockton Unified and Lodi Unified School District. The County Office of Education was able to supply financial information for all county school districts, except Stockton Unified and Lodi Unified. Demographic information for all schools was received from the County Office of Education. All Districts were contacted to confirm the information presented in this report was correct.

Materials Reviewed:

- Board Bylaws for each school district
- Demographics and Board financial compensation provided by the County Office of Education
- Board financial compensation data provided by Stockton Unified
- Board financial compensation data provided by Lodi Unified

Discussion

Table One describes the demographics of each school including: the number of schools in each district; enrollment as of March 15, 2011, number of trustees, their monthly stipend, the most (cap) the district allowed for health benefits per trustee, the total annual cost to the district, and the maximum potential compensation the district could have to pay. There were a variety of different costs to each district, as well as variations by trustee, depending on what each trustee opted to receive. The explanations for the differences within each board are detailed in the footnotes.

**Table 1:
2010 School Board Compensation**

School Districts	Schools	Enrollment*	Trustees	Monthly Stipend	District Paid Health Benefits**	Total Actual Cost to District	Maximum Potential Cost***
Banta Elementary	1	290	3	\$0	\$17,992	\$53,976	\$53,976
Escalon Unified	7	2,948	5	\$0	\$7,860 ¹	\$18,200	\$39,300
Jefferson Elementary	4	2,503	5	\$240	\$0	\$12,640	\$14,400
Lammersville Elementary	3	1,810	5	\$77	\$0	\$9,802 ²	\$9,262
Lincoln Unified	11	8,783	5	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Linden Unified	8	2,422	7	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Lodi Unified	54	30,942	7	\$675	\$4,070 ³	\$57,500	\$59,875
Manteca Unified	29	23,226	7	\$380	\$8,031 ⁴	\$63,217	\$88,137
New Hope Elementary	1	203	3	\$0	\$11,950 ⁵	\$11,950	\$34,771
New Jerusalem Elementary	3	762	3	\$0	\$10,200 ⁶	\$10,200	\$30,600
Oak View Union Elementary	1	420	5	\$0	\$11,000	\$55,000	\$55,000
Ripon Unified	6	3,056	5	\$0	\$12,830 ⁷	\$19,244	\$32,073
Stockton Unified	59	38,141	7	\$675	\$10,123 ⁸	\$106,173	\$127,568
Tracy Unified	24	17,494	7	\$400	\$8,482 ⁹	\$62,714	\$92,974
SJ County Office of Education	see 10	2700	5	\$300	\$14,818	\$90,381	\$92,090

*Enrollment as of 3/15/2011

**Health Benefits per member includes: health, dental, vision, and life insurance, if offered

***This figure is the total possible cost to the district if every board member opted to collect full stipend and health benefits, including health, dental, vision, and life insurance, if offered

¹Three members received all benefits; two declined all benefits

²Figure is higher than the maximum due to turnover in the board in 2010

³One member received all benefits; two opted for dental and vision; four declined all health benefits

⁴One member received all benefits at \$8031; district reimbursed two members \$11,730.48 for member paid health benefit expenses including dental and vision; district reimbursed and/or paid \$12,381.11 for two members for life insurance; one members declined all benefits, one member declined all benefits and stipend

⁵Only one member chose to receive health benefits

⁶Two members declined benefits

⁷Three members received all benefits; two declined all benefits

⁸Three members received all benefits; two opted for medical rebate, dental and vision costing the district \$7,004.69 per member; one member who did not serve a full year received dental and vision only costing the district \$418.85; one member declined all benefits

⁹Three members received all benefits; four members declined benefits

¹⁰SJCOE Operates SELPA (Special Education Local Plan Area) classrooms at various locations and schools, SELPA centers, and all Community Schools in San Joaquin County

Conclusion

Severe revenue shortfall in K-12 education statewide has resulted in lay-offs of staff and certificated employees, larger class sizes, and other significant reductions in services, such as home to school transportation. Boards may wish to reduce or eliminate district paid benefits on their behalf. In addition, the public may wish to discuss trustee compensation with their Boards.

No Response Required

Links

San Joaquin County Office of Education: <http://www.sjcoe.org/>

California Education Code 35012: www.cde.ca.gov/re/lr/do/documents/dochap7.doc

California Education Code 35120:

<http://www.aroundthecapitol.com/code/getcode.html?file=../edc/35001-36000/35120-35124>

Disclaimer

Grand Jury reports are based on documentary evidence and the testimony of sworn or admonished witnesses, not on conjecture or opinion. However, the Grand Jury is precluded by law from disclosing such evidence except upon the specific approval of the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court, or another judge appointed by the Presiding Judge (Penal Code Sections 911, 924.1(a) and 929. Similarly, the

Grand Jury is precluded by law from disclosing the identity of witnesses except upon an order of the court for narrowly defined purposes (Penal Code Sections 924.2 and 929).