

**A REPORT BY
THE 2011-2012 CONTRA COSTA COUNTY GRAND JURY**

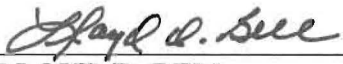
725 Court Street
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Report 1204

**EDUCATION BOARD
COMPENSATION
Leading by Example**

APPROVED BY THE GRAND JURY:

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JOHN T. LAETTNER
JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT

Contra Costa County Grand Jury Report 1204

**EDUCATION BOARD COMPENSATION
Leading by Example**

TO: Boards in Contra Costa County (see distribution list)

SUMMARY

It is a common perception that our elected education board members serve without compensation. As there are frequent exceptions, the Grand Jury decided that the public should be aware of the total compensation paid to our elected education board members. The Grand Jury is not questioning the legality of any individual's compensation, and neither condemns nor condones that compensation.

The Grand Jury recognizes the many education board members who offer their time and expertise for no or little compensation.

BACKGROUND

Many of our public education districts are facing unprecedented financial challenges. For example, the County's largest kindergarten through 12th grade (K-12) district, Mt. Diablo Unified School District, has reduced staff levels and employee benefits, curtailed or eliminated programs in sports, music, and the arts, closed campuses, and increased headcount in classrooms. Since 2009, the Contra Costa Community College District has increased the per unit fee from \$20 to \$36, or by 80%.

The elected leaders who have been entrusted with these difficult financial decisions are compensated inconsistently. Many receive nothing, although individual compensation can exceed \$30,000.

The Grand Jury surveyed the 18 education districts in the County that support all or some of grades K-12 on the compensation for their board members. The Contra Costa Community College District and the Contra Costa Office of Education were also included in the survey. Each board has five elected members.

The Grand Jury sought information concerning dollar amounts for these total compensation components for fiscal year 2010 – 2011:

- Meeting compensation, fees, stipends, and allowances
- Health benefits

- Life Insurance
- Employer paid retirement
- Other compensation

Additionally, the Grand Jury reviewed the amounts paid by the districts for travel, mileage and training for board members. Although those data were not included in the compensation totals, they are part of this report.

Total Compensation Variables

Compensation ranges for primary and secondary school board members are set by State Education Code section 35120, based upon student average daily attendance the prior year. For example, a district with an average daily attendance of 200 students could pay a maximum of \$1,440 per year to each board member, for a total annual board expense of \$7,200. The table below shows compensation ranges:

Education Board Member Compensation Ranges For Primary and Secondary Schools

Student Average Daily Attendance>=	Student Average Daily Attendance<	Individual Monthly	Individual Annual	Board Annual
1	150	\$ 60	\$ 720	\$ 3,600
150	1,000	120	1,440	7,200
1000	10,000	240	2,880	14,400
10,000	25,000	400	4,800	24,000
25,000	60,000	750	9,000	45,000

Compensation ranges for college districts are set by State Education Code section 72024, based upon full-time equivalent students (FTES) the prior year. Contra Costa Community College District's FTES count is around 30,000, which entitles each board member to receive \$750 per month.

Compensation ranges for County Boards of Education are set by State Education Code sections 1090 and 1205, based upon student average daily attendance for the entire county the prior year. Contra Costa County's total average daily attendance of around 156,000 students entitles each board member to receive \$400 per month.

Variation in total compensation is determined by:

1. Student average daily attendance, or FTES count, for the prior school year, which dictates maximum allowable meeting compensation.
2. Number of meetings each board member attends.
3. Whether the board has elected to increase individual board member compensation 5% above the base compensation range, as provided by statute.

4. Number of board members accepting compensation for his or her services.
5. Types of benefits offered to board members, such as health coverage, life insurance, or retirement benefits.

The following tables show compensation data for the education boards in Contra Costa County for fiscal year 2010-2011.

Total Board Compensation Components FY2010-11

Sorted by ascending Total Board Comp

	Meeting Comp	Health Care	Retirement	Life Insurance and Other	Total Board Comp	Travel / Training / Other [†]
Acalanes Union High School District	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$650
Byron Union School District	0	0	0	0	0	8,067
Canyon School District	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lafayette School District	0	0	0	0	0	2,735
Moraga School District	0	0	0	0	0	2,440
Orinda Union School District	0	0	0	0	0	2,195
Knightsen Elementary School District	0	9,326	0	0	9,326	0
Martinez Unified School District	14,400	0	0	0	14,400	0
John Swett Unified School District	14,400	0	0	0	14,400	3,638
Pittsburg Unified School District	14,280	0	0	480	14,760	5,305
Oakley Union Elementary	15,142	0	0	0	15,142	0
Liberty Union High School District	15,420	0	0	0	15,420	5,545
San Ramon Valley Unified School District	19,200	0	0	0	19,200	255
Brentwood Union School District	14,400	15,141	0	0	29,541	1,951
Walnut Creek School District	14,400	18,258	84	1,236	33,978	4,224
Antioch Unified School District	24,800	22,184	0	127	47,111	1,378
Contra Costa Office of Education	26,019	30,008	0	0	56,027	4,360
West Contra Costa Unified School District	43,961	36,541 ²	0	6,000 ³	86,502	3,002
Mt. Diablo Unified School District	44,454	48,035	0	0	92,489	3,874
Contra Costa Community College District	41,300	52,310	0	322	93,932	2,401
Totals	\$302,176	\$231,803	\$84	\$8,165	\$542,228	\$52,020
Averages	\$15,109	\$11,590	\$4	\$408	\$27,111	\$2,601

¹ Reimbursed expenses that are not included in the compensation totals. These expenses include travel, mileage, training, seminars, conferences, and miscellaneous reimbursed items such as the cost of award dinner attendance.

² Includes cash in lieu of health care coverage.

³ Expense allowances.

Education Board Benefits for fiscal year 2010-2011:

- **Board members from the following six school districts received no compensation:** Acalanes Union High School District, Byron Union School District, Canyon School District, Lafayette School District, Moraga School District, and Orinda Union School District.

- Health Care
 - **Board members from the following twelve school districts did not receive health care benefits:** Acalanes Union High School District, Byron Union School District, Canyon School District, John Swett Unified School District, Lafayette School District, Liberty Union High School District, Martinez Unified School District, Moraga School District, Oakley Union Elementary, Orinda Union School District, Pittsburg Unified School District, and San Ramon Valley Unified School District.
 - **Board members of eight education districts were offered health care benefits, although some members of those boards declined coverage:** Antioch Unified School District, Brentwood Union School District, Contra Costa Community College District, Contra Costa Office of Education, Knightsen Elementary School District, Mt. Diablo Unified School District, Walnut Creek School District, and West Contra Costa Unified School District.
 - The average total cost of health care benefits per entire board was \$11,590. But for the eight boards that offer health care benefits, the average cost for each board was \$28,975.
 - The highest health care benefit total for an entire board was \$52,310, for the Contra Costa Community College District.

- Life Insurance
 - **Board members of four districts received life insurance coverage:** Antioch Unified School District, Contra Costa Community College District, Pittsburg Unified School District, and Walnut Creek School District.

- One board member of the Contra Costa Community College District was reported to be eligible for a retirement health plan based on that member's service on the board.

- One board member of the Walnut Creek School District was reported as receiving a retirement plan payment of \$84 for the fiscal year, based on that member's service on the board.

- Reimbursement for travel, mileage, and training is not compensation. However, there is considerable variation from the board average of \$2,601, with Byron Union School District expending the most for reimbursements at \$8,067.

Board Compensation Analysis FY2010-11

Sorted by ascending Total Board Comp

	Total Board Comp	Avg Individual Total Comp	Highest Individual Total Comp	Highest Individual Health Benefit	Avg Daily Attendance	Board Cost Per Student
Acalanes Union High School District	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	5,413	\$0.00
Byron Union School District	0	0	0	0	1,625	0.00
Canyon School District	0	0	0	0	66	0.00
Lafayette School District	0	0	0	0	3,101	0.00
Moraga School District	0	0	0	0	1,677	0.00
Orinda Union School District	0	0	0	0	2,375	0.00
Knightsen Elementary School District	9,326	1,865	8,060	8,060	477	19.55
John Swett Unified School District	14,400	2,880	2,880	0	1,548	9.30
Martinez Unified School District	14,400	2,880	2,880	0	3,804	3.79
Pittsburg Unified School District	14,760	2,952	3,890	0	9,034	1.63
Oakley Union Elementary	15,142	3,028	3,890	0	4,445	3.41
Liberty Union High School District	15,420	3,084	3,084	0	6,768	2.28
San Ramon Valley Unified School District	19,200	3,840	4,800	0	27,072	0.71
Brentwood Union School District	29,541	5,908	9,631	6,751	7,968	3.71
Walnut Creek School District	33,978	6,796	8,839	5,712	3,186	10.66
Antioch Unified School District	47,111	9,422	10,425	8,000	17,778	2.65
Contra Costa Office of Education	56,027	11,205	18,021	12,729	156,208 ⁴	0.36
West Contra Costa Unified School District	86,502	17,300	22,804	12,812	27,393	3.16
Mt. Diablo Unified School District	92,489	18,498	24,541	15,937	32,293	2.86
Contra Costa Community College District	93,932	18,786	32,343	23,857	30,585 ⁵	3.07
Totals	\$542,228	\$108,446			184,267	\$2.94
Averages	\$27,111	\$5,422			9,213	\$2.94

⁴ This is the total average daily attendance for the County's K-12 students, which determines board compensation. The enrollment at the Office of Education's schools is 1,285. Using that number, the Board Cost per Student is \$72.32.

⁵ Full Time Equivalent Students (FTES), which determines board compensation, as many community college students are part time. Student enrollment is 39,053. Using that number, the Board Cost Per Student is \$2.41

The above table analyzing Board Compensation for fiscal year 2010-2011 shows the following:

- The average total compensation for an entire board was \$27,111.
- The average total compensation per individual board member was \$5,422.
- The lowest total compensation for an individual board member was \$0. The highest total compensation for an individual board member was \$32,343.
- The average cost of board compensation per student was \$2.94. The highest cost per student was \$19.55 for the Knightsen Elementary School District.
- Averages can mask considerable spreads between the lowest and highest compensated

members of the same board. For example:

- In the Knightsen Elementary School District, the average individual compensation was \$1,865; the highest compensated member received \$8,060.
- In the Contra Costa Office of Education, the average individual compensation was \$11,205; the highest compensated member received \$18,201.
- In the Contra Costa Community College District, the average individual compensation was \$18,786; the highest compensated member received \$32,343.

FINDINGS

1. The cost of total board compensation can be a significant expense to districts facing financial challenges.
2. Travel, mileage, training and other reimbursed expenditures are not a direct form of compensation, but can be a significant expense to districts facing financial challenges.
3. Health care benefits, or cash in lieu of health care, can be the costliest compensation component.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. All education districts should consider conducting an annual public review of the total compensation provided to their board members and address whether changes in compensation are warranted. The review should include a detailed breakdown of all components of that compensation, including meeting compensation, fees, stipends, allowances, health care or cash in lieu of health care, life insurance, employer-paid retirement plans, other post-retirement benefits, technology equipment and services, and any other form of compensation.
2. As part of the public annual review discussed in Recommendation 1, all districts should consider reviewing their board travel, mileage, training and other reimbursed expenses to verify that they were necessary.
3. As part of the public annual review discussed in Recommendation 1, districts that provide health care benefits should consider whether it is appropriate to provide such benefits to their elected board members.

REQUIRED RESPONSES

Findings and Recommendations

Acalanes Union High School District	1, 2
Antioch Unified School District	1, 2, 3
Brentwood Union School District	1, 2, 3
Byron Union School District	1, 2
Canyon School District	1, 2

Contra Costa Community College District	1, 2, 3
Contra Costa Office of Education	1, 2, 3
John Swett Unified School District	1, 2
Knightsen Elementary School District	1, 2, 3
Lafayette School District	1, 2
Liberty Union High School District	1, 2
Martinez Unified School District	1, 2
Moraga School District	1, 2
Mt. Diablo Unified School District	1, 2, 3
Oakley Union Elementary	1, 2
Orinda Union School District	1, 2
Pittsburg Unified School District	1, 2
San Ramon Valley Unified School District	1, 2
Walnut Creek School District	1, 2, 3
West Contra Costa Unified School District	1, 2, 3

Distribution List:

Acalanes Union High School District, Antioch Unified School District, Brentwood Union School District, Byron Union School District, Canyon School District, Contra Costa Community College District, Contra Costa Office of Education, John Swett Unified School District, Knightsen Elementary School District, Lafayette School District, Liberty Union High School District, Martinez Unified School District, Moraga School District, Mt. Diablo Unified School District, Oakley Union Elementary, Orinda Union School District, San Ramon Valley Unified School District, Walnut Creek School District, West Contra Costa Unified School District