

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 2851

As of February 24, 2016

Title: An act relating to increasing compensation for school directors.

Brief Description: Concerning compensation of school directors.

Sponsors: House Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Frame, Magendanz, Bergquist, Hargrove, Pollet, Harris, Moscoso, Muri, S. Hunt, Pettigrew, Springer, Kagi, Kuderer, Clibborn, Sawyer, Cody, Stanford, Ormsby, Senn, Farrell, Hudgins, Moeller, Kochmar and Santos).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/11/16, 60-36.

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/23/16.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Susan Mielke (786-7422)

Background: The registered voters of a school district elect the members of the district's board of directors to a term of four years. School board director elections are held in odd-numbered years. The expiration of the directors' terms are staggered so that all of the terms do not expire in the same year.

Members of a school district board of directors may receive \$50 per day for attending board meetings and performing other services on behalf of the district, if authorized by board resolution. This compensation must not exceed \$4,800 a year. Only locally collected excess levy funds may be used for director compensation. The compensation must not cause the state to incur any funding obligation. Any director compensation provided must be in addition to any reimbursement for expenses. A director may waive any or all of the compensation following a statutory process.

The Washington State School Directors' Association (WSSDA) was originally founded in 1922 as a private association, but in 1947 was established in statute as a state agency. All members of the boards of directors of the 295 school districts are statutorily required to be a member of WSSDA.

Summary of Bill: The limits on school district director compensation of \$50 per day and \$4,800 a year are modified. Instead, the maximum yearly compensation for a director must

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not exceed an amount equal to half of the annual salary of a beginning certificated teacher in the district, as determined by the school district board.

Compensation increases may not take effect before January 1 subsequent to the adoption of the board resolution authorizing the compensation and the election of one or more school directors.

Beginning August 1, 2017, and every two years thereafter, each school district board must report to WSSDA the annual amount of director compensation.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: It used to be that serving on the school board was a volunteer position. But in large school districts the time commitment now rivals a full-time job, which impacts these districts' ability to retain school directors. That is why the original version of the bill addressed the largest school districts. But other districts face different challenges. This bill has changed to address all school districts and not just the largest because small, rural school districts have difficulties in getting individuals to run for the school board. The bill also ties the upward limit on school director compensation to the level of funding for teachers in the district. Directors would be able to earn up to half of the annual salary of a beginning teacher in the district.

We appreciate the evolution of this bill to be more accessible to each of our state's school districts; as well as its attempt to honor the deep commitment of the 1477 current and prospective school board directors across the state. We believe that the adjustments made in the substitute provide an opportunity for districts to consider their current compensation practices for school directors within a range that more aptly honors the vast commitments and expectations of school board members in districts across the state; and WSSDA to begin a regular data collection to gather and report director compensation practices. While we do not have current data, it will not surprise you that the practice is inconsistent and varied across our state. This data will be important to inform future policy decisions in this area. WSSDA firmly believes the decision to compensate their school board directors should be made at the local level and that we urge local decision making to be mindful in light of the continued reliance on local levies that currently support district basic education commitments.

CON: School directors should be required to have education degrees and education experience. We need to bring accountability to the hiring process and support competitive hiring. Administrators should not be allowed to hire their friends and push other teachers out of a job.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Frame, Prime Sponsor.

CON: Grazyna Prouty, WA Certified teacher (continuing contract in Tahoma 2005/2006 - 2010-2011), ESL/ELL, Bilingual.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.

Signed In, Unable to Testify & Submitted Written Testimony: PRO: Jessica Vavrus, WA State School Directors' Association.