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**SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5860**

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**State of Washington**

**69th Legislature**

**2026 Regular Session**

**By** Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators Cortes, Conway, Frame, Llias, Nobles, Pedersen, Valdez, and C. Wilson; by request of Superintendent of Public Instruction)

READ FIRST TIME 01/22/26.

1 AN ACT Relating to school board compensation; amending RCW  
2 28A.343.400 and 28A.320.050; adding a new section to chapter 28A.345  
3 RCW; creating new sections; and providing an effective date.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that school director  
6 compensation has not changed in 40 years. The legislature recognizes  
7 it is the policy of the state to: (1) Ensure, for the sake of  
8 educational excellence, that the electorate has the broadest and most  
9 diverse possible field in which to choose qualified candidates for  
10 its school boards; (2) ensure that the opportunity to serve on school  
11 boards is open to all, regardless of financial circumstances; and (3)  
12 ensure that the time-consuming and demanding service as directors is  
13 not limited to those able or willing.

14 **Sec. 2.** RCW 28A.343.400 and 1987 c 307 s 2 are each amended to  
15 read as follows:

16 (1) Each member of the board of directors of a school district  
17 may receive compensation of (~~(fifty dollars)~~) \$100 per day or portion  
18 thereof for attending board meetings and for performing other  
19 services on behalf of the school district, not to exceed (~~four~~  
20 ~~thousand eight hundred dollars per year, if the district board of~~

1 ~~directors has authorized by board resolution, at a regularly~~  
2 ~~scheduled meeting, the provision of such compensation. A board of~~  
3 ~~directors of a school district may authorize such compensation only~~  
4 ~~from locally collected excess levy funds available for that purpose,~~  
5 ~~and compensation for board members shall not cause the state to incur~~  
6 ~~any present or future funding obligation)) \$13,750 per year.~~  
7 Compensation provided to a director under this section that is in  
8 excess of \$3,000 per year must be authorized by the board of  
9 directors at a regularly scheduled meeting. School board director  
10 compensation may only be paid from locally collected excess levy  
11 funds available for that purpose, and may not cause the state to  
12 incur any present or future funding obligation.

13 (2) Any director may waive all or any portion of his or her  
14 compensation under this section as to any month or months during his  
15 or her term of office, by a written waiver filed with the district as  
16 provided in this section. The waiver, to be effective, must be filed  
17 any time after the director's election and before the date on which  
18 the compensation would otherwise be paid. The waiver shall specify  
19 the month or period of months for which it is made.

20 (3) The compensation provided (~~is~~) under this section shall be  
21 in addition to any reimbursement for expenses paid to such directors  
22 by the school district.

23 (4) Any adjustment in compensation made pursuant to this section  
24 applies to sitting school directors at the time such adjustment  
25 becomes effective.

26 (5) The office of the superintendent of public instruction shall,  
27 at intervals not to exceed five years, review and adjust the  
28 compensation limits for school directors established under subsection  
29 (1) of this section. The adjustments must reflect cumulative changes  
30 in the cost of living, as measured by the consumer price index or a  
31 comparable index.

32 **Sec. 3.** RCW 28A.320.050 and 1977 c 73 s 1 are each amended to  
33 read as follows:

34 (1)(a) The actual expenses, including costs for child care, of  
35 school directors in going to, returning from and attending upon  
36 directors' meetings or other meetings called or held pursuant to  
37 statute shall be paid.

38 (b) Likewise, the expenses of school superintendents and other  
39 school representatives chosen by the directors to attend any

1 conferences or meetings or to attend to any urgent business at the  
2 behest of the state superintendent of public instruction or the board  
3 of directors shall be paid.

4 (2) The board of directors may pay the actual and necessary  
5 expenses for travel, lodging and meals a superintendent candidate  
6 incurs when he or she attends an employment interview in the school  
7 district.

8 (3) The school directors, school superintendents, other school  
9 representatives or superintendent candidates may be advanced  
10 sufficient sums to cover their anticipated expenses in accordance  
11 with rules and regulations promulgated by the state auditor and which  
12 shall substantially conform to the procedures provided in RCW  
13 43.03.150 through 43.03.210.

14 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.345  
15 RCW to read as follows:

16 (1) The Washington state school directors' association shall  
17 develop and provide a training program on school district funding and  
18 finance for all members of school district boards of directors.

19 (2) The training program must enhance school directors'  
20 understanding of:

21 (a) State and local funding structures;

22 (b) Budgeting practices; and

23 (c) Fiscal accountability requirements applicable to school  
24 districts.

25 (3)(a) All individuals serving as school directors on the  
26 effective date of this section must complete the training within one  
27 year of the effective date of this section.

28 (b) All individuals elected or appointed as school directors  
29 after the effective date of this section must complete the training  
30 at least once during the first year of the director's term of office.

31 (c) School directors are strongly encouraged to renew or retake  
32 the training at least once during each term of office to remain  
33 current with changes in state and local funding laws and fiscal  
34 accountability standards.

35 (4) School directors may not be charged any fee for attendance  
36 and must be compensated for participating in the training under this  
37 section.

1        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 5.**    Section 4 of this act takes effect January  
2    1, 2027.

3        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 6.**    If specific funding for the purposes of  
4    section 4 of this act, referencing section 4 of this act by bill or  
5    chapter number and section number, is not provided by June 30, 2026,  
6    in the omnibus appropriations act, section 4 of this act is null and  
7    void.

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