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**SENATE BILL 5860**

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**State of Washington**

**69th Legislature**

**2026 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Cortes, Conway, Frame, Liias, Nobles, Pedersen, Valdez, and C. Wilson; by request of Superintendent of Public Instruction

Prefiled 12/09/25. Read first time 01/12/26. Referred to Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education.

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 and may only be collected  
10 from levy funds available for this purpose.

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

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

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

24 (5) The office of financial management shall, at intervals not to  
25 exceed five years, review and adjust the compensation provided to  
26 school directors. The adjustments must reflect cumulative changes in  
27 the cost of living, as measured by the consumer price index or a  
28 comparable index as determined by the office of financial management.

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

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

35 (b) Likewise, the expenses of school superintendents and other  
36 school representatives chosen by the directors to attend any  
37 conferences or meetings or to attend to any urgent business at the  
38 behest of the state superintendent of public instruction or the board  
39 of directors shall be paid.

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

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

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

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

16       (2) The training program must enhance school directors'  
17 understanding of:

18       (a) State and local funding structures;

19       (b) Budgeting practices; and

20       (c) Fiscal accountability requirements applicable to school  
21 districts.

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

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

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

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

35       NEW SECTION.   **Sec. 5.** Section 4 of this act takes effect January  
36 1, 2027.

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

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