

**From:** Rob Miles  
**To:** public comment  
**Subject:** School Board Stipend  
**Date:** Tuesday, September 26, 2023 3:54:09 PM

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Greetings:

I recently moved to Springfield after living in Coos Bay for 50+ years. I read with great concern that the Springfield School District is considering offering a stipend to Board members. Having served on the Coos Bay School District Budget Committee for several years, and as a Coos Bay City Councilor for 4 1/2 years, the last two as the Council President, I find this quite puzzling.

Your reasons for doing this do not resonate with me. Offering a stipend might very well attract more public servants, but what is their motivation? My experience in public service, as well as working with a volunteer Board in my paid job, is that it is much more productive to have Board members that are motivated solely by the mission of the organization. When you attract people with other motivations or agendas, you are creating a recipe for dysfunction.

I strongly urge you to table this discussion until there is more evidence that it is a beneficial move.

Thank you,

Rob Miles  
Springfield, OR

**From:** [Anna Bielefeldt](#)  
**To:** [public comment](#)  
**Subject:** School board compensation  
**Date:** Monday, September 25, 2023 3:57:52 PM

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School board compensation would make it possible to have a more diverse board and encourage younger people to run for office. I'm for it

**From:** [Tom Saunders](#)  
**To:** [public comment](#)  
**Date:** Sunday, September 24, 2023 2:46:24 PM

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REPRODUCED  
This message is from a non-SPS email address. Please use caution and only click links and attachments if you are sure they are safe.

How about we let the taxpayers in springfield school district decide if they want to pay the school board 500.00 dollars each per month. I'm pretty sure that's going to come from the property taxes we pay. What happens when they decide thats not enough and they want a pay raise. They just vote it in?

**From:** [Herbert Inman](#)  
**To:** [public comment](#)  
**Subject:** School board member stipen  
**Date:** Thursday, September 21, 2023 3:46:41 PM

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Hello,

Although I do appreciate and value what the school board members do and the time that is involved in their volunteer position.

I believe that the positions should remain just that, volunteer. Individuals should be aware of the time commitment going into hold one of these positioned, to then be able to make an informed decision.

I believe that those funds could go to many more things that would benefit the schools and students involved.

Thanks for your time.

Sheila Collins

**From:** [Lila Holman](#)  
**To:** [public comment](#)  
**Subject:** Board member stipend  
**Date:** Thursday, September 21, 2023 3:46:40 PM

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The school board does important work, without a doubt. Members run knowing it is a volunteer read: unpaid position. Teachers do not become teachers expecting to purchase standard classroom supplies from their own pockets. Children attending school do not expect being told they cannot get another copy of the instructions for a project because the class has already used their printing budget.

These are basics. Until school districts can afford to BASICS, they shouldn't consider extras. That's irresponsible money management. If you can't afford to pay the light bill, you have no business taking vacation.

Regards,  
Lila in Springfield

**From:** [Joseph Escalera](#)  
**To:** [public comment](#)  
**Subject:** Stipend  
**Date:** Thursday, September 21, 2023 3:46:37 PM

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Hello,

I am curious as to what this stipend is for. When already our students don't have all of the tools necessary to be successful.

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [april holbrook](#)  
**To:** [public comment](#)  
**Subject:** Stipend  
**Date:** Thursday, September 21, 2023 3:46:35 PM

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UNRECORDED This message is from a non-SPS email address. Please use caution and only click links and attachments if you are sure they are safe.

I do not agree with this, As I've known Board member positions have always been volunteer, if I'm wrong, I apologize. However there are a lot of school programs, classified/certified positions that are lacking funds because of school budgets. I think that money would do better staying in the budget for school needs, over paying people for what are usually volunteer positions.

April Holbrook

**From:** [Lindsay Vaughn](#)  
**To:** [public comment](#)  
**Subject:** Board Stipend  
**Date:** Thursday, September 21, 2023 3:06:24 PM

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This message is from a non-SPS email address. Please use caution and only click links and attachments if you are sure they are safe.

Good Afternoon,

I am incredibly disheartened to hear that this democratic body is proposing a financial stipend for members and would be interested to hear which board member proposed such a thing as well as their reasoning. When running for school board all members were aware of the position and what it entailed, they were voted in by the constituents of the district to represent the students and parents of said districts. This appears incredibly disingenuous at best and exploitative at worst. My child attends Brattain online and has since Kindergarten as I, myself, have health complications. The program ran very well through Covid and I've always been impressed by the teachers and their ability to maintain a classroom and devote time and attention to each student and their needs. However, each year the district has seemingly had a poor retention rate or alternatively has dropped teachers in order to save money. Last year, my student was in a 2nd-3rd grade blend and that worked well as my 2nd grader was in advanced placement. This year, my student's classroom was originally 1st-3rd grade blend and due to your school district's inability to invest in online learning and teacher retention my student's teacher is now teaching 1st-6th grade. The level of irresponsibility and disservice this does to both the students and teacher is immeasurable. As a result, my child's school day has changed from 8:30am-2:50pm to 8:30am-11am. Is this a responsible way of teaching? Is this serving the community? What research has been done on outcomes of shortening the school day to this degree and how well do you suppose a single educator can teach responsibly with this variation of grade levels simultaneously? How Springfield School District board members can in good faith be petitioning for a stipend that has not been in place, while failing to invest that money into the students and retaining a teacher to educate the online learning community is baffling and selfish. School Board members should be investing in making the educational setting a safer and more equitable space. These flaws should be on the top of the list of things to address in meetings and that money should not be funding a position that they voluntarily ran for. I am happy to share this email explanation along with the newsletter to the community, as they should know the true situation at hand. My child's 504 plan has been completely ignored as it's impossible for the teacher to manage with such a classroom burden. The irresponsibility and illegal actions of the school district are at hand, as the failure to comply with the ADA and education plans is not on the educator when the school is placing them in such a position. Reinvest that money into hiring an additional educator for Brattain online students so you may be in compliance with the laws as well as serve the students you vowed to when you took office.



**From:** Kristen Dubord  
**To:** public comment  
**Subject:** Stipend  
**Date:** Thursday, September 21, 2023 7:25:54 AM

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This message is from a non-SPS email address. Please use caution and only click links and attachments if you are sure they are safe.

I got an email an a. Wondering that this 500 dollars would do for the board members? I don't think we should be taking from the schools budgets at all

**From:** Aleecia Hansen  
**To:** [public comment](#)  
**Subject:** Concerning Board Stipend  
**Date:** Wednesday, September 20, 2023 9:12:04 PM

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This message is from a non-SPS email address. Please use caution and only click links and attachments if you are sure they are safe.

Good Evening,


I just wanted to voice my feelings toward board members being "paid" for their volunteered time. I think it's a poor use of funds that could be designated elsewhere to better our schools & our kids education. These positions were filled by people that choose to volunteer their time if they are struggling financially cause they are volunteering their time then maybe it's just not a good fit. So many other boards of volunteers in our community are not paid and this should not be any different.

I also believe that this could really open a door for people trying to join the board with ill intention to make a buck.

Thanks,  
Aleecia Hansen

**From:** George Jessie  
**To:** public comment  
**Subject:** School board stipend proposal  
**Date:** Wednesday, September 20, 2023 7:58:05 PM

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 This message is from a non-SPS email address. Please use caution and only click links and attachments if you are sure they are safe.

I would not support a stipend for school board members. I like the idea of volunteer participation by area residents. I was a school board member in another local district and felt my volunteering as a non-paid member was a civic duty more people should volunteer for. I would advocate for term limits for all elected positions to encourage more participation. I think paying school board members would wrongly encourage more expensive elections that are already more costly than warranted.

Sincerely,

George Jessie

**From:** [Jeremy Depew](#)  
**To:** [public comment](#)  
**Date:** Wednesday, September 20, 2023 7:07:18 PM


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No, the schoolboard should not be getting a \$500 a month. Stipend which equates to \$6000 a year. Intel, they start listening to the parents and stop putting them on watchlist.

**From:** [Greg Brock](#)  
**To:** [public comment](#)  
**Subject:** Stipend  
**Date:** Wednesday, September 20, 2023 6:47:41 PM

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 This message is from a non-SPS email address. Please use caution and only click links and attachments if you are sure they are safe.

Thank you for your willingness to receive public input for the school board stipend. In order to fully respond, I'd like to know what typical monthly hour commitment is for board members.

Broadly speaking, given that I don't have all the information, I am in favor. It seems like a reasonable way to promote greater balance in the board make up. My fear is that many board member campaigns are expensive political endeavors, and the targeted groups who this would benefit won't be able to get elected anyway. If this is the way the rest of the state is going, and 4J is doing it, then we should go for it.

Thank you,

Greg Brock  
(Parent to 4 SPS students and spouse to an SPS teacher)

**From:** [nicholeburcal](#)  
**To:** [public comment](#)  
**Subject:** Against stipend  
**Date:** Wednesday, September 20, 2023 4:41:12 PM

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Getting paid for this position opens up to bias, bribery and worries me that my kid's education will no longer be a priority.

Regards,

Nichole Burcal

Sent from my T-Mobile 5G Device

**From:** [Shawn Ireland](#)  
**To:** [public comment](#)  
**Subject:** Comment on Stipend  
**Date:** Wednesday, September 20, 2023 4:31:34 PM

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DISCLAIMER  
This message is from a non-SPS email address. Please use caution and only click links and attachments if you are sure they are safe.

Dear board,

I do not agree with a monthly stipend going to school board members. When you ran for the school board you knew it was an unpaid position. You get reimbursements for any expense that you have as a member, but that is where it should end. The taxpayers money should go to the kids and not in the school boards pocket. If anything it should go to the taxpayers to vote on this, not the people that are getting the money. I have a strong NO.

Shawn Ireland

**Received Date:** October 3, 2023, 8:15pm

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**Name:** Anonymous

**Customer Type:** Parent/Guardian

**Dialogue Type:** Concern

**Email:**

**Phone:**

**Dialogue #:** 13986

**Topic:** Contact the School Board

**Priority:** P2(Normal)

**Status:** Unopened

## Message

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**Subject:** Stipend

### Original Message:

I don't not like the idea of board members having a stipend-even if it does come from their budget. What can the stipend be spent on? Who decides whether the funds are being spent appropriately? Would those funds directly give money to teachers or school supplies? Where was the \$500 being spent previously? Can we easily take \$500 from something so you can have your stipend?-maybe that means that you don't actually need that \$500 in the first place. Can the stipend be spent on personal things?



Received Date: September 22, 2023, 1:55pm

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**Name:** Anonymous

**Customer Type:** Employee

**Dialogue Type:** Comment

**Email:**

**Phone:**

**Dialogue #:** 13943

**Topic:** Contact the School Board

**Priority:** P2(Normal)

**Status:** Closed

## Message

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**Subject:** School board stipend

### Original Message:

I do not support the proposed \$500 monthly stipend for board members.

Received Date: September 22, 2023, 6:55am

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**Name:** Clay Frederick

**Customer Type:** Parent/Guardian

**Dialogue Type:** Comment

**Email:** Cfrederick1997@yahoo.com

**Phone:** (541) 870-0192

**Dialogue #:** 13938

**Topic:** Contact the School Board

**Priority:** P2(Normal)

**Status:** Closed

## Message

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**Subject:** Stipend for board members

### Original Message:

I serve on a non-profit organization and have been for over six years. I serve because I want to help make a difference by helping kids in Springfield/Eugene. I don't do it for glory or gratification. And I certainly don't serve for the money.

When money gets involved, too often that becomes the focus and reason why someone serves. I want people on the board that WANT to serve to help, not for money.

Years ago, after being a CASA for two years, my wife and I decided to foster kids. Not for money but to help kids. I saw way too often foster parents wanting more kids for the money. It was almost a business for them.

Please don't go down the road of paying a stipend. Once that starts, it will be an endless road of wanting increases and other perks. And the reason why someone "volunteers" to be on the board.

Respectfully,

Clay Frederick  
Thurston district

Received Date: September 28, 2023, 6:04pm

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**Name:** Hidden Customer

**Customer Type:** Parent/Guardian

**Dialogue Type:** Suggestion

**Email:**

**Phone:**

**Dialogue #:** 13972

**Topic:** Contact the School Board

**Priority:** P2(Normal)

**Status:** Closed

## Message

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**Subject:** Board Member Stipends

### Original Message:

It might be wise for the current Board to consider the 27th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, as important precedent and guidance for an elected group of representatives voting to increase their compensation (or to allow it at all). A vote to allow stipends ought to result in the ability for ENSUING ELECTED directors to accept or deny compensation for their work, but not current ones.

Received Date: September 20, 2023, 12:53pm

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**Name:** Hidden Customer

**Customer Type:** Parent/Guardian,  
Community Member

**Dialogue Type:** Concern

**Email:**

**Phone:**

**Dialogue #:** 13917

**Topic:** Contact the School Board

**Priority:** P2(Normal)

**Status:** Closed

## Message

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**Subject:** Paid Stipend For School Board Members

### Original Message:

The suggestion that people get paid for what has always been volunteer work in our local schools is a very slippery slope. Rampant attempts all over the country to sabotage the integrity of our public school system by paid (and bought off) politicians is dangerous enough, but if local crazies find out that there's money to be made in the school board, it will open the door to similar trespasses. People should come to these meetings and make decisions out of the goodness of their hearts with well-meaning intentions, not to make a quick buck at the literal expense of our children. We must protect and uplift the educational decisions here in Oregon lest our already shaky national rate (41st out of 50 states!!!) deteriorate even further.

You say you only have the children's best interest in mind, so prove it.

Signed,

A concerned citizen

Received Date: September 20, 2023, 11:00pm

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**Name:** Anonymous

**Customer Type:** Parent/Guardian

**Dialogue Type:** Comment

**Email:**

**Phone:**

**Dialogue #:** 13928

**Topic:** Contact the School Board

**Priority:** P2(Normal)

**Status:** Closed

## Message

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**Subject:** Proposed Stipend for Board Members

### Original Message:

On the whole, I support the idea of a stipend, for all of the reasons Mr Light and Ms Mason mentioned. Your hard work deserves to be compensated, and I would like to see more working-class folks like myself on the board. But \$500 a month? EACH? From the length of your Vimeo account videos, it seems you meet for an average of 4 hours a month. \$125 an hour seems a little steep in an area where the average citizen earns maybe \$20 an hour. (I get \$15, and I work nights, so no public office for me.) If you want the equally-hard working parents to get on board with this, you'll either need to increase your working hours or decrease your proposed stipend amount, or both. Surely \$100 a month would cover your gas and a six-pack, yeah? I just want to be clear, I vote YES on every tax bond that comes my way. I'm not against spending money. I just need you to be aware of how this looks to those of us whose kids are on SNAP and Medicaid.

Received Date: September 21, 2023, 9:04am

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**Name:** Anonymous

**Customer Type:** Parent/Guardian

**Dialogue Type:** Comment

**Email:**

**Phone:**

**Dialogue #:** 13930

**Topic:** Contact the School Board

**Priority:** P2(Normal)

**Status:** Closed

## Message

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**Subject:** stipend

### Original Message:

\$500 is a significant stipend amount, every month, for every board member?

Received Date: September 21, 2023, 12:13am

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**Name:** Terri Smeltzer

**Customer Type:** Parent/Guardian

**Dialogue Type:** Comment

**Email:** bntsmeltz@comcast.net

**Phone:** (541) 321-5917

**Dialogue #:** 13929

**Topic:** Contact the School Board

**Priority:** P2(Normal)

**Status:** Closed

## Message

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**Subject:** possible stipend discussion

### Original Message:

I think it is high time this might occur. As a past board member of 8 years for Eugene Christian School I know the time and commitment being on a board requires. The general public likely has no idea how much it takes and that there are other committees to serve on as well. The small stipend might just be the incentive for an otherwise excellent candidate to run for a board position because that person might have needed help financially to make it work. Good Luck!

**Received Date:** September 20, 2023, 9:00pm

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**Name:** Shanna

**Customer Type:** Parent/Guardian

**Dialogue Type:** Comment

**Email:** smatti@hsolc.org

**Phone:** (541) 337-3636

**Dialogue #:** 13927

**Topic:** Contact the School Board

**Priority:** P2(Normal)

**Status:** Closed

## Message

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**Subject:** Stipend

### Original Message:

Where are the funds coming from to fund this stipend for school board members? Do other districts pay a stipend? Is this sustainable? How many board members are there?



Received Date: September 20, 2023, 6:45pm

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**Name:** Teresa Ostrander

**Customer Type:** Parent/Guardian,  
Community Member

**Dialogue Type:** Comment

**Email:** wicklessforscents@gmail.com

**Phone:**

**Dialogue #:** 13926

**Topic:** Contact the School Board

**Priority:** P2(Normal)

**Status:** Closed

## Message

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**Subject:** Stipend

### Original Message:

I don't think it's necessary. Use board money to directly impact students and teachers. I pay property taxes for sps, have homeschooled outside of the public school for years, and this year I did end up putting one of my children in public school but was asked to spend quite a bit on supplies for the classroom. Use the board money for these supplies.

Received Date: September 20, 2023, 4:25pm

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**Name:** Hidden Customer

**Customer Type:** Parent/Guardian

**Dialogue Type:** Comment

**Email:**

**Phone:**

**Dialogue #:** 13922

**Topic:** Contact the School Board

**Priority:** P2(Normal)

**Status:** Closed

## Message

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**Subject:** \$500 stipend

### Original Message:

No you can put that money to better use putting in into the schools or teachers. I'm sure you all should at least live in Springfield to be on this board so why do you NEED a \$500 stipend a month, you pretty much took away the options for lunches so only 1-2 things are served even then when the last bit of kids come in for lunch it is something completely different because they ran out. Can take kids treats for birthdays because you all seem to think all these kids are fat and need a calorie limit. I know of at least 1 teacher who drives 40 minutes to get to school another to get home you could give them a stipend and I would be all for it but for the board that meets what once or twice a month no put the money to better use for your teachers and students not just to line your own pockets.

**Received Date:** September 20, 2023, 4:25pm

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**Name:** Hidden Customer

**Customer Type:** Parent/Guardian

**Dialogue Type:** Comment

**Email:**

**Phone:**

**Dialogue #:** 13921

**Topic:** Contact the School Board

**Priority:** P2(Normal)

**Status:** Closed

## Message

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**Subject:** Monthly Stipend?

### Original Message:

I think it's in poor taste for the school board to want to be paid for their volunteer work. Looks like grifting.

**Received Date:** September 20, 2023, 4:20pm

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**Name:** Hidden Customer

**Customer Type:** Parent/Guardian

**Dialogue Type:** Comment

**Email:**

**Phone:**

**Dialogue #:** 13920

**Topic:** Contact the School Board

**Priority:** P2(Normal)

**Status:** Closed

## Message

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**Subject:** RE: Stipend for Board Members

### Original Message:

It would be against the spirit of the position and the concept of volunteerism in the community for the school board members to receive a monthly stipend for their service.

Received Date: September 20, 2023, 4:14pm

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**Name:** Hidden Customer

**Customer Type:** Parent/Guardian

**Dialogue Type:** Comment

**Email:**

**Phone:**

**Dialogue #:** 13919

**Topic:** Contact the School Board

**Priority:** P2(Normal)

**Status:** Closed

## Message

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**Subject:** board member compensation

### Original Message:

as a parent of a child going to a public Springfield school I can say that has hard as our PTO members at Yolanda alone work to provide supplies and host fundraiser and help with everything in between the monthly compensation should NOT be passed. once a compensation is involved no matter how big or small there is always something else that goes without. What would be going without in the manner? I'm confident that the money could go towards something else rather than begin to pay a position that has been volunteer for so long. Thank you board members for all that you do, I hope you're just has happy to continue to do it unpaid.

Received Date: September 20, 2023, 4:07pm

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**Name:** Mark Guiley

**Customer Type:** Parent/Guardian

**Dialogue Type:** Concern

**Email:** Mguiley@islercpa.com

**Phone:**

**Dialogue #:** 13918

**Topic:** Contact the School Board

**Priority:** P2(Normal)

**Status:** Closed

## Message

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**Subject:** Stipend

### Original Message:

This proposal of paying yourselves a stipend should be a strong no.

Don't volunteer if you need to be paid.

Spend the money on kids, classrooms, and numerous outdated facilities...not yourselves...crazy

Received Date: September 19, 2023, 5:29pm

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**Name:** Anonymous

**Customer Type:** Parent/Guardian,  
Community Member

**Dialogue Type:** Comment

**Email:**

**Phone:**

**Dialogue #:** 13912

**Topic:** Contact the School Board

**Priority:** P2(Normal)

**Status:** Closed

## Message

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**Subject:** Board members being paid.

### Original Message:

The last thing we need are people on the board who are there for the money.

Received Date: September 19, 2023, 4:42pm

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**Name:** Don Elkington

**Customer Type:** Community Member **Dialogue Type:** Comment

**Email:** donelkington@yahoo.com

**Phone:** (541) 554-9923

**Dialogue #:** 13911

**Topic:** Contact the School Board

**Priority:** P2(Normal)

**Status:** Closed

## Message

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**Subject:** Board compensation

**Original Message:**

Yes, board members should receive monthly compensation.



**From:** [Jonathan Hornung](#)  
**To:** [public comment](#)  
**Subject:** Written Public Comment  
**Date:** Monday, October 9, 2023 12:19:35 PM

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Name: Jonathan Hornung  
District Residency: Eugene resident, THS teacher  
Email Address: [hornungjon@gmail.com](mailto:hornungjon@gmail.com)  
Topic: Volleyball 3A / 4A State Tournament

Dear Springfield School Board,

I am writing this comment not as a SPS employee, but rather as a fan and official of volleyball. This past year, Springfield High School hosted the 3A and 4A state tournaments for high school volleyball. The tournament was a success and will be returning to SHS November 3rd and 4th, but I worry this year might be the last.

The SHS gym is uniquely set-up to allow matches to take place simultaneously while also providing warm-up courts in the auxiliary gyms. This makes SHS the only school in the area that could feasibly host the state tournament. Feedback from teams and officials from last year's tournament was overwhelmingly positive about the gym, the organizers and the practice spaces. However, feedback about the facilities outside of the gym was negative and puts the future of state tournaments taking place at SHS and the Eugene-Springfield area at risk.

The reason I am writing this comment is to bring attention to the fact that having the state tournament in Springfield is a great way to highlight the positive aspects of our community. Teams and spectators come to Springfield from all over the state and we need to make sure that they have a positive experience, so we can ensure that SHS remains the host for years to come. I know we are extremely short staffed in terms of custodial staff and as a THS employee I know how hard they are working and asking them to take on additional duties is probably not feasible. I hope that the board can allocate additional resources leading up to the tournament or help organize volunteers to get SHS ready for the tournament weekend.

Last year 20 lane county officials helped with line-judging, the scorebook, libero tracking and scoreboard as well as setting up a hospitality room for the officials traveling from all over the state. And I know just as many will help this year and will work tirelessly to make sure the tournament runs as smoothly as possible. If we as officials can help out in any way, please reach out to discuss further the ways that we can make sure SHS remains the state tournament host for years to come.

Thank you,

Jonathan Hornung  
OSAA Volleyball Official

**From:** [Kristen Shoop](#)  
**To:** [public comment](#)  
**Cc:** [Todd Mann](#)  
**Subject:** Springfield soccer fields  
**Date:** Monday, September 25, 2023 8:22:33 PM  
**Attachments:** [ATT00001.txt](#)  
[ATT00002.txt](#)  
[ATT00003.txt](#)

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This message is from a non-SPS email address. Please use caution and only click links and attachments if you are sure they are safe.

To the members of the board:

I am writing to you this evening regarding the condition of the soccer fields at Thurston Middle school and Briggs Middle school. I am writing as a parent, as a U11 soccer coach, and as a Physical Therapist who treats sports injuries daily.

My soccer team is practicing currently at Briggs Middle school where the size of the holes is enough to catch a child's foot and sprain an ankle. There is nearly no grass and my players have complained of sore knees after running on the dry, barren ground. There is a large mound of dry dirt that is directly in front of the goal box that makes trying to accurately shoot the ball nearly impossible. The area where the goalie stands has large cracks and grooves that catch her cleats each evening. We have had 3 sprained ankles so far this season on just our practice field. When a girl falls down, her skin is ripped up since there is no grass to cushion her fall. The ground is so hard and void of grass that the ball moves so quickly that they cannot control it or catch up to it. They may as well be playing indoor soccer! I have many girls that are new to soccer this season and teaching ball skills is very challenging when the ball bounces so high off the firm dirt and rolls so rapidly. It is really quite appalling that this is the condition of the field chosen for U11. I am coming from LYSA that played at Petersen Barn with lush grass. We practiced at Monroe Middle where we could teach true ball handling skills in grass. My 2nd grade daughter practices at Cal Young for Kidsports and plays games at Gilham. The comparison photos make Briggs look ridiculous.

BRIGGS:













**From:** [Mikell Harshbarger](#)  
**To:** [public comment](#)  
**Subject:** Written Public Comment  
**Date:** Thursday, October 5, 2023 7:40:46 PM

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Good day and hello Honorable Members of the School Board for Springfield Public Schools,

News outlets report that teacher morale is at an all-time low. It certainly is true that many of the problems related to teacher morale that we have in our district are ones that can be found in other school districts. It is also true that some of the solutions to these problems are ones that must happen locally. We submit for your consideration some thoughts about something that could be done in the short term to send out a positive message to teachers. In these difficult times, we teachers desperately need a morale boost.

When this district implemented changes due to the pandemic, one of the first things that happened to teachers and other school staff was that we were required to empty our classrooms and offices of many personal items, things that we used to make our “homes away from home” more comfortable for ourselves and our students. We hauled out the comfy student and teacher furniture, area rugs, house plants, and small personal appliances that made life easier and our classrooms more inviting. We did this at a time when we did not know much about the coronavirus and how it was spread.

When distance learning ended, we were anxious to restore our “homes away from home” as best we could. However, we quickly found out that this was unacceptable; in particular, having small personal appliances like mini-refrigerators or microwave ovens in the classroom was now forbidden. This seems odd when you consider that these things are fine in a college dorm room and are allowed in neighboring school districts like 4J, Bethel, and South Lane among others.

You might be wondering “what’s the big deal - doesn’t your school have these kinds of appliances that you can use in the staff room?” At this time, Page Elementary does not have adequate refrigerator space for *all* staff to store *all* their lunches as well as many other things that we want to keep cold like coffee creamer, drinks, condiments, salad dressings, etc. Our two refrigerators might be sufficient in a workplace in which people work on different shifts or can leave the building for meals, but not somewhere where nearly everyone is working at the same time. If there are special events in our building or leftovers from a staff event, there is simply not enough room in our school’s refrigerators for everyone to store their lunches, cold drinks, condiments, etc.

Moreover, being a teacher can be extremely exhausting, and on many days, every minute of the half-hour we have for lunch is precious. There are times when we give up large chunks of our breaks to deal with student needs or issues, so the thirty-minute lunch may actually be closer to ten or fifteen minutes. We also don’t have the luxury of leaving the building to grab lunch out like other district employees can. Since it is no longer permissible to have a small microwave in one’s classroom, some of us have to get in line in the staff room in order to have a hot lunch. It can take nearly ten minutes to walk to the staff room, heat up lunch, and then return to eat in the classroom. Many of us prefer not to eat in the small staff room as it is a very poorly ventilated space in which the heat does not work properly. (Last year, there

were many days when the staff room would heat up to over eighty degrees.) Giving up a third of one's lunchtime in order to have hot food just isn't worth it.

As a result, many members of the Page staff have stopped trying to have a hot meal at school if it means going to the staff room to use the microwave ovens there. This is a shame, especially during the cold, winter months when so many student and teacher spaces in our very old building are not adequately heated.

Giving teachers and other staff the autonomy to make our "homes away from home" more comfortable and usable would tell staff that you want us here and you want us to be comfortable and to love being here. Rescinding these unwarranted restrictions would be an immediate, no cost (or very low cost) morale boost that would show that district leadership does have empathy for us. For years in this district, it was not a problem for building staff to have small personal appliances in their rooms.

Furthermore, at a time when this district is competing with neighboring districts for classroom teachers, it makes sense to be in line with what neighboring districts allow teachers to do.

We appreciate your hard work and your devotion to our district and public education in general. While we realize there are many important and complicated issues facing our district, retaining teachers needs to be at the top of the list. Rescinding the district policy that forbids something that was not a problem in our district in the past and is currently not a problem in many, many other school districts (and dorm rooms) throughout our country would be a step in the right direction.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this issue.

Signed (in alphabetical order by last name,)

Erin Allman

Bethany Boardrow

Jesse Grasseth

Mikell Harshbarger

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