

Sub-Committee Review on Governing Board Expenses and Remuneration

October 21, 2014

Members: Bob Benevento (chair), Rick Badillo, Claudia Rossi

Background:

“The Board of Education shall hold memberships in and attend meetings of such local, state, regional and national school board associations as may be most appropriate, and shall look upon such memberships as opportunities for in-service training, inter-district communications and legislative advocacy.”

MHUSD Board By-Law 8150

Adopted: October 20, 1980

Reviewed: August 31, 1987

Board By-Laws that relate to board member expenses and remuneration

BB 9005: The Governing Board believes that its primary responsibility is to act in the best interests of every student in the district. The Board also has major commitments to parents/guardians, all members of the community, employees, the state of California, laws pertaining to public education, and established policies of the district. To maximize Board effectiveness and public confidence in district governance, Board members are expected to govern responsibly and hold themselves to the highest standards of ethical conduct.

BB 9230: Incoming members are encouraged to attend Board meetings and review agenda materials available to the public in order to become familiar with current issues facing the district. Incoming members also may, at district expense and with approval of the Board, attend workshops and conferences relevant to their individual needs or to the needs of the Board as a whole or the district.

BB 9240: Citizens elected to the Governing Board are entrusted with the responsibility of governing district schools. The Board recognizes that its members need training that helps them understand their responsibilities, stay abreast of new developments in education, and develop boardmanship skills.

All Board members may attend conferences for the purpose of Board development. Board business shall not be discussed at conferences.

Board members shall report to the Board, orally or in writing, as soon as possible on the in-service activities they attend.

BB 9250: Funds for Board development shall be budgeted annually for each Board member.

- Reimbursement of Expenses
 - Board members shall be reimbursed for traveling expenses incurred when authorized in advance by the Board.
 - The rate of reimbursement shall be the same rate specified for district personnel.

BB 9320: Attendance by a majority of Board members at any of the following events is not subject to the Brown Act provided that a majority of the Board members do not discuss specific district business among themselves other than as part of the scheduled program;

1. A conference or similar public gathering open to the public that involves a discussion of issues of general interest to the public or to school board members

ITEMS FOR CLARIFICATION:

What Conferences, Events or Training might qualify for trustee remuneration or reimbursement?

1. Educational Conferences
 - a. CSBA Annual Conference
 - i. Delegate Assembly (2x yearly)
 - b. ACSA Leadership Summit
 - c. CA Latino SBA
 - d. CUE Conference
2. Professional Development Training (by approved providers)
 - a. Masters in Governance
 - b. New Board member training
 - c. New Board President training
 - d. ACSA Leadership
3. "Summit" Meetings
 - a. Silicon Valley Education Summit
 - b. South County Legislative Summit
4. SCCSBA Events
 - a. Fall Dinner
 - b. Legislative Brunch
 - c. Hoffman Awards Dinner
5. Local Events
 - a. Chamber of Commerce Sponsored events (where education is recognized)
 - b. Santa Clara County Teacher Recognition Awards
 - c. Other, as approved by the Board of Education

What Expenses should Qualify?

1. Travel and Expenses
 - a. Hotel
 - b. Transportation
 - a. Commercial (Air, Rail, Taxi)
 - b. Personal Vehicle (mileage at approved rate)
 - c. Meals (per diem)
 - a. Breakfast
 - b. Lunch
 - c. Dinner
 - d. Tips and Gratuities as appropriate
 - e. DOES NOT include personal amenities (laundry, in-room entertainment et al)

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION:

1. Should there be an annualized individual trustee expense budget?
 - a. How much (what financial limitations)?
 - b. Should there be any flexibility or latitude?
2. Should there be a limit on conference attendance?
3. Should there be a limit on professional development (1x) sessions in a fixed time period?
 - a. What is the limit?
 - b. Example – Masters in Governance series
 - c. Should overnight travel & accommodations be considered in the decision process?
4. Should conference / event attendance, travel, meals, hotels etc. be pre-approved before registration and purchase, noting projected expenses and reason for attending
5. Should a “bottoms up” annual budget be submitted by each board member indicating the “what, when, where and why” the member wants to attend a certain event or program?
6. Who would review and approve the expense requests?
7. Should a detailed expense report be submitted noting all expenditures, with receipts?
8. Should the Annual budget for the Board of Education be increased or realigned?

OTHER DISTRICTS (random Santa Clara Cty & beyond)

1. Pay for all conference expenses, including hotel, travel and meals
2. Pay for conference registration, but not hotels, meals, or travel
3. Pay for conference registration and lower cost hotels, but not meals and travel
4. Pay for conference registration, hotels and meals, but not travel
5. Pay for conference registration, hotels, and travel, but not meals
6. Pay for nothing – trustee absorbs all costs
7. Provide a flat rate “per diem” without receipts required

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Sub-Committee;

1. Believes there should be a measurable limitation on individual trustee expenses.
2. Agrees that the limitation should be established by a budgetary process, not a hard "cap", and that there may be flexibility in the process
3. Proposes that each trustee develop an annual trustee budget listing desired conferences, forums, professional development programs etc., noting projected costs for conference registration, hotel, transportation, meals and incidentals
4. Agrees that the suggested annual budget per trustee for professional development, conferences and all associated Travel and Expenses (transportation, hotel, meals, et al) should be \$3,000.00 per trustee per year with upward as well as downward flexibility
5. Proposes that 1x professional development costs (i.e. Masters in Governance sessions) be tracked as a separate line item in the district budget
6. Suggests there should not be a limit on the number of events attended so long as proposed costs are within the trustees self-determined and approved budget and approved in advance by the Board
7. Proposes that extended training programs, such as Masters in Governance, be completed over the course of two or more years, not in one year
8. Proposes that whenever possible such educational programs be attended locally so as to minimize costs for T & E
9. Urges the Board to adhere to Board By-laws regarding review and authorization in advance of requests for trustee expenditures for conferences, forums, personal development and travel.
10. Recognizing work and family commitments, recommends that travel to conferences (CSBA-AEC et al) be booked as early as possible to secure most favorable transportation rates and hotel accommodations whenever possible.
11. Recommends that each request for expenditure be accompanied by a completed District issued Request for Authorization form to be approved by the Board in session
12. Suggests that certain events costing under \$100.00, held within Santa Clara County, and sponsored by an approved list of organizations be pre-authorized. These expenses, though pre-authorized, will be measured against the individual trustee's annualized budget projection.
13. Recommends that a completed and signed expense report with attending receipts be submitted for reimbursement by the Finance Department.
14. Submits a sample expense report form for consideration and future use
15. Wants it noted that according to the Comparative Budget Report dated 9/9/14, line items 5210 – 5910 that the board spent only 54% of its budget allocation even though it may have overspent in conference attendance by \$1562.00.
16. Also recommends that line item 5220 from the same report, conference expenses, be revisited to recognize a number closer to what actual expenses could be, especially with an influx of at least three new board members in post-election 2014
17. Submits the following draft of a revised by-law on Re-imbusement of Expenses

Board By Law: Reimbursement (DRAFT)

Reimbursement of Expenses

Board members shall be reimbursed for reasonable, actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of duties including but not limited to when attending meetings or conferences, or when making trips on official district business when authorized in advance by the Board. Board members shall submit the appropriate and required District conference / travel documents, including but not limited to all receipts, for reimbursement. Reimbursements for expenses and conference travel, if any, shall be drawn from the appropriate budget category contained with the annual budget adopted by the Board. Such meetings and conferences reimbursements shall be within budgetary constraints. Allowable meetings and conferences include, but are not necessarily limited to, such events sponsored by the organizations listed below:

Association of California School Administrators (ACSA)
California Association of Bilingual Educators (CABE)
California County Boards of Education (CCBE)
California Latino School Boards Association (CLSBA)
California School Boards Association (CSBA)
National School Boards Association (NSBA)
Santa Clara County School Boards Association (SCCSBA)
Silicon Valley Education Foundations (SVEF)
Silicon Valley Leadership Group (SVLG)

Appropriate Board member registration and expenses, under \$100.00, for conferences and forums sponsored by the listed organizations and held within Santa Clara County are preauthorized.

*The CSBA Annual Education Conference is preauthorized for Board members reimbursement of conference fees and travel expenses, except if a Board member loses their November election and the CSBA conference takes place after the election.

The rate of reimbursement shall be the same rate specified for district personnel

In the interest of transparency, on a quarterly basis as noted in the Governance Calendar, a report summarizing expenses claimed by Board members shall be submitted by the Superintendent to the Board of Trustees