

SIERRA SANDS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

**Board of Education
Special Meeting**

**April 9, 2009
District Office Conference Room
113 Felspar
www.ssusd.org**

We, the members of the Board of Education of the Sierra Sands Unified School District, are committed to providing the highest quality education in a safe environment to all K-12 students. We believe the school shares with the family, church, and community the responsibility for developing life-long learners who are responsible, productive

A G E N D A

CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

6:45 p.m. for Closed Session
7:00 p.m. for Open Session

Amy Covert
Judy Dietrichson
Bill Farris
Tim Johnson
Tom Pearl
Kurt Rockwell, Vice President/Clerk
Michael Scott, President

Joanna Rummer, Superintendent

MOMENT OF SILENCE

1. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

2. CLOSED SESSION

The board will confer in closed session regarding one case of potential litigation.

3. GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

3.1 Discussion Regarding Board Member Compensation and the Reduction of Expenses

4. ADJOURNMENT

3. GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

3.1 Discussion Regarding Board Member Compensation and the Reduction of Expenses

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: School board members are elected officials who choose to serve the community and the district because they have a passion for students and for education. Their service to the district comes in a variety of ways. They attend approximately 17 regularly scheduled board meetings a year plus special meetings, workshops, and county, state, and federal meetings. Board members research items and receive input from individuals in the community to ensure that they are making decisions in the best interest of the students. The decisions they must make are very difficult and complex and involve a great deal of analysis and reflection.

Since unification, Sierra Sands Unified School District board members have received a monthly stipend for their services. Currently that stipend is \$240 per month. They also receive health and welfare benefits equivalent to those received by management employees. Though not compensation, board members are also reimbursed for actual expenses incurred on district travel.

Compensation received by board members is nominal compared to the time and commitment required by the job. In addition, the law requires board members to assume personal liability and responsibility for many of the decisions they make. Further justification for providing compensation for services is the distinction that must be made that board members are not volunteers. A volunteer works at his or her own discretion and has no true obligation to serve. Nothing compels a volunteer to perform the duties of a position. However, if some compensation is provided for service, a value is assigned to the position ensuring that a person is more likely to give serious consideration to the service required. One tends to be accountable when a monetary value is placed on his or her service. School districts by law cannot function without a governing board and compensation provides recognition of the tangible benefits the district receives for board member services.

CURRENT CONSIDERATIONS: The district is in the process of responding to budget reductions as a result of decreased revenue from the State of California. At the March 19 board meeting, in an effort to do their part in responding to the budget shortfall, board members discussed a variety of options over which they can control spending specific to the board. These included reducing the number of board members to a total of five, reducing or eliminating the stipend, reducing or eliminating the health and welfare benefits, and reducing travel. They also discussed the legitimacy of providing compensation in recognition of the responsibilities of the job.

To facilitate discussion, the attached spreadsheet was provided that outlined board member expenditures since the 2004-05 school year. Additionally, the following information was provided to aid in the discussion.

- The district has aimed to reduce expenditures as equitably and evenly as possible. Reductions to date are in the 15-percent range.
- Individual members of the board or the board as a group have the discretion of declining a monthly stipend or a portion thereof.
- Individual members or the board as a group may choose to opt out of the health and welfare benefits coverage or pay for a portion of the coverage with the maximum contribution from the individual of 50 percent.
- If the board wishes to entertain reducing the number of members from seven to five as a means of reducing costs, the process can be done by taking signatures of a certain percentage of voters or a governing board resolution to the county committee on school district organization. The county committee then conducts at least one hearing in the district and at the conclusion either approves or disapproves the proposal. If the county committee approves, the proposal is then presented to the voters not later than the next succeeding election for governing board members. The extra board members relinquish their positions pursuant to a lot run by the county superintendent.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS: To be determined.

SUPERINTENDENT'S RECOMMENDATION: The board will continue discussion regarding its efforts to reduce expenditures of the board. If it is the board's desire, it may identify reductions in expenditures from its discretionary expenses in concert with budget reductions being made across the district.

Sierra Sands Unified School District
 School Board Expenses

Type of Expense	2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009	YTD
Stipends	19,440	19,240	18,560	18,280	12,540	12,540
Statutory Benefits	2,183	1,948	1,663	1,503	995	995
Health and Welfare Benefits	73,983	72,092	74,994	79,598	53,749	53,749
Supplies (American School Board Journal, Spectrum Graphics, Modern Trophy, Registrar of Voters)	255	1,662	222	494	-	-
Computers	-	-	-	7,815	-	-
Travel (CSBA, Kern County School Boards, ACSA)	15,956	10,574	21,911	20,179	14,839	14,839
Dues/Memberships (CSBA, Kern County School Boards, ACSA)	7,449	8,193	8,556	9,480	11,093	11,093
TOTAL ANNUAL EXPENSE	119,266	113,708	125,906	137,349	93,216	93,216