

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
COUNTY OF HOKE

IN THE GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE  
SUPERIOR COURT DIVISION

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

V.

IN THE MATTER OF  
PAYMENTS TO THE HOKE  
COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD  
MEMBERS

STATES MOTION AND  
ORDER TO COMPELL  
RECORDS

NOW COMES THE STATE by and through the undersigned District Attorney, and respectfully requests that this court require the Hoke County School Board AND the Hoke County Board of Commissioners be compelled to provide any and all records and/or minutes for open or closed meetings, discussions, emails, texts, or any other information regarding payments made to the Hoke County School Board members since 2017, and any minutes or records of approval of these funds by the Hoke County Board of Commissioners. . In support of this motion the State shows the following:

1. That the District Attorney's Office received a complaint regarding the possible misuse of public funds in the form of payments made to the Hoke County School Board in the form of bonuses paid to the School Board Members.
2. That the District Attorney's Office contacted the law firm of Tharrington Smith whom represents the Hoke County School Board and requested information in regards to payments made to the Hoke County School Board Members.
3. That on August 10, 2023 the District Attorney's Office sent a letter to Rod Malone at Tharrington Smith and requested specific information regarding payments made to the Hoke County School Board Members. (Attached 1)
4. That Rod Malone forwarded a copy of a press release issued on August 4, 2023, where the Interim Superintendent announced the issuance of stipends and bonuses to the Hoke County School Board and attached payments to the Board Members for the past six years, including Covid and retention bonuses. (Attached 2)
5. That the District Attorney also received an excel file showing payments made to the Hoke County School Board Members in the form of travel stipends and retention bonuses.
6. That the North Carolina General Statutes require any funding to School Board Members to be approved by the Hoke County Board of Commissioners:

**"115C-38. Compensation of board members.**

The tax-levying authority for a local school administrative unit may, under the procedures of G.S. 153A-92, fix the compensation and expense allowances paid members of the board of education of that local school administrative unit. Funds for the per diem, subsistence, and mileage for all meetings of county and city boards of education shall be provided from the current expense fund budget of the particular county or city."

7. That under N.C.G.S. 14-92 it is a felony to embezzle funds by public officers or trustees.
8. That the District Attorney's Office is seeking any and all records and/or minutes for open or closed meetings, discussions, emails, texts, or any other information regarding payments made to the Hoke County School Board Members since 2017, and any minutes or records of approval of these funds by the Hoke County Board of Commissioners.
9. Wherefore, the State prays that an order issue to require the Hoke County School Board and the Hoke County Board of Commissioners be compelled to provide the above named records to the Hoke County District Attorney's Office.

This the 17<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2023.

  
District Attorney

**THIS CAUSE** coming on to be heard and being heard before the undersigned Judge of Superior Court; and it appearing to the Court that any and all records and/or minutes for open or closed meetings, discussions, emails, texts, or any other information regarding payments made to the Hoke County School Board Members since 2017, and any minutes or records of approval of these funds by the Hoke County Board of Commissioners, should be provided to the Hoke County District Attorney's Office.

**IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED, ADJUDGED, AND DECREED** that any and all records and/or minutes for open or closed meetings, discussions, emails, texts, or any other information regarding payments made to the Hoke County School Board Members since 2017, and any minutes or records of approval of these funds by the Hoke County Board of Commissioners, should be provided to the Hoke County District Attorney's Office.

This the 18<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2023.

  
PRESIDING JUDGE

Attached 1.



*State of North Carolina  
General Court of Justice  
Prosecutorial District Twenty-Nine*

MICHAEL K. HARDIN  
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

Hoke County Courthouse Annex  
Post Office Box 668  
Raeford, NC 28376  
910-838-4141

Moore County Courthouse  
Post Office Box 429  
Carthage, NC 28327  
910-722-5010

August 10, 2023

Mr. Rod Malone,

My office has received a complaint regarding the Hoke County School Board improperly compensating themselves. I initially understood that they may have used Federal Covid Funds to compensate school employees and included themselves in this compensation. I understand now that they may have paid some staff members with these funds but did not pay themselves with Federal Funds. This leaves the question that if the Hoke County School Board did compensate themselves, did that compensation comply with requirements for approval by the Hoke County Board of Commissioners pursuant to N.C.G.S. 115C-38. Please provide any and all information regarding this compensation and whether this compensation complies under the North Carolina General Statutes. As you are aware as the District Attorney for Hoke County I am responsible for inquiring as to misuse of public funds and this may require referral of this matter to an investigatory agency. I also would ask that if this compensation did not comply with North Carolina law, if you are in possession of any information regarding the awareness of one or more of the school board members or others to intentionally violate the law. Thank you in advance for your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael K. Hardin".

Michael K. Hardin  
District Attorney  
29<sup>th</sup> Prosecutorial District  
Moore and Hoke Counties

**Hardin, Michael K.**

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**From:** Rod Malone <RMalone@tharringtonsmith.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, August 11, 2023 10:13 AM  
**To:** Hardin, Michael K.  
**Cc:** Maura O'Keefe  
**Subject:** Hoke School Board Compensation  
**Attachments:** BM STIPEND 6YEARS (1).xlsx

You don't often get email from rmalone@tharringtonsmith.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

**Mr. Hardin:**

While not responsive to all the questions in your letter, I am forwarding you the following and attached press release issued by the Hoke County Schools on August 4, 2023. I will get back to you shortly on the questions raised in your letter.

Please let me know if I can be of additional assistance.

Rod Malone  
Tharrington Smith, LLP  
150 Fayetteville Street, Suite 1800  
P.O. Box 1151  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27602  
Work Direct: (919) 861-1332  
Fax: (919) 861-1338  
Email: [rmalone@tharringtonsmith.com](mailto:rmalone@tharringtonsmith.com)



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----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** Meredith Bounds <[meredith.bounds@hcs.k12.nc.us](mailto:meredith.bounds@hcs.k12.nc.us)>  
**Date:** Fri, Aug 4, 2023 at 1:12 PM  
**Subject:** Recent FOIA request response  
**To:** Catharin Shepard <[cshepard@thenews-journal.com](mailto:cshepard@thenews-journal.com)>, Jessica Brown <[jessica@thenews-journal.com](mailto:jessica@thenews-journal.com)>, Nunnboys <[nunnboys@yahoo.com](mailto:nunnboys@yahoo.com)>  
**CC:** Rodney Shotwell <[rodney.shotwell@hcs.k12.nc.us](mailto:rodney.shotwell@hcs.k12.nc.us)>, Rod Malone <[RMalone@tharringtonsmith.com](mailto:RMalone@tharringtonsmith.com)>, Maura O'Keefe <[MOKeefe@tharringtonsmith.com](mailto:MOKeefe@tharringtonsmith.com)>, Diana Hasegawa-Brown <[DBrown@tharringtonsmith.com](mailto:DBrown@tharringtonsmith.com)>

Good afternoon -

In June 2023, Interim Superintendent Dr. Shannon Register approved the issuance to Board members of a stipend in the amount of \$4,000. Dr. Deb Dowless also issued bonuses to Board members in June 2022 (in the amount of \$900) and January 2023 (in amounts of \$600 or \$1,200, depending on their length of tenure on the Board). Both Dr. Dowless and Dr. Register approved the Board bonuses around the time employees were issued similar bonuses. While the employee bonuses were paid from state, federal, and/or local funds, Board member bonuses were paid exclusively from local funds.

Also, attached to this email with an accounting of payments made to Board Members for the past six years, including monthly travel and monthly stipend as well as the Covid and Retention Bonuses.

As always, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

Have a good afternoon -

--

Meredith Bounds  
Director of Public Relations  
Hoke County Schools  
301 Wooley Street  
Raeford, NC 28376  
Office: 910-875-4106  
Cell: 910-366-6512

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--

Rodney H. Shotwell, Ed.D.  
Interim Superintendent  
Hoke County Schools

FY 2017

BOARD MEMBER NAME	MONTHLY STIPEN	MONTHLY TRAVEL
BUIE, BARBARA J	\$ 4,750.00 12 checks	\$ 2,400.00 12 checks
MAYNOR, DELLA	\$ 4,750.00 12 checks	\$ 2,400.00 12 checks
MCRAE, ROSA M	\$ 4,700.00 12 checks	\$ 2,400.00 12 checks
PICKETT, IRISH B	\$ 4,750.00 12 checks	\$ 2,400.00 12 checks
RICHARDS, FRANK H	\$ 4,800.00 12 checks	\$ 2,400.00 12 checks

FY 2018

BOARD MEMBER NAME	MONTHLY STIPEN	MONTHLY TRAVEL
BUIE, BARBARA J	\$ 4,800.00 12 checks	\$ 2,400.00 12 checks
MAYNOR, DELLA	\$ 4,800.00 12 checks	\$ 2,400.00 12 checks
MCRAE, ROSA M	\$ 4,800.00 12 checks	\$ 2,400.00 12 checks
PICKETT, IRISH B	\$ 4,950.00 12 checks	\$ 2,400.00 12 checks
RICHARDS, FRANK H	\$ 4,650.00 12 checks	\$ 2,400.00 12 checks

FY 2019

BOARD MEMBER NAME	MONTHLY STIPEN	MONTHLY TRAVEL
BUIE, BARBARA J	\$ 4,850.00 12 checks	\$ 2,400.00 12 checks
MAYNOR, DELLA	\$ 4,850.00 12 checks	\$ 2,400.00 12 checks
MCRAE, ROSA M	\$ 4,850.00 12 checks	\$ 2,400.00 12 checks
PICKETT, IRISH B	\$ 5,150.00 12 checks	\$ 2,400.00 12 checks
RICHARDS, FRANK H	\$ 4,550.00 12 checks	\$ 2,400.00 12 checks

FY 2020

BOARD MEMBER NAME	MONTHLY STIPEN	MONTHLY TRAVEL
BUIE, BARBARA J	\$ 4,750.00 12 checks	\$ 2,400.00 12 checks
MAYNOR, DELLA	\$ 4,650.00 12 checks	\$ 2,400.00 12 checks
MCRAE, ROSA M	\$ 4,650.00 12 checks	\$ 2,400.00 12 checks
PICKETT, IRISH B	\$ 5,050.00 12 checks	\$ 2,400.00 12 checks
RICHARDS, FRANK H	\$ 4,500.00 12 checks	\$ 2,400.00 12 checks

FY 2021

BOARD MEMBER NAME	MONTHLY STIPEN	MONTHLY TRAVEL
BUIE, BARBARA J	\$ 5,000.00 12 checks	\$ 2,400.00 12 checks
GILL, KEISHA	\$ 2,725.00 6 checks	\$ 1,200.00 6 checks
MAYNOR, DELLA	\$ 5,000.00 12 checks	\$ 2,400.00 12 checks
MCRAE, ROSA M	\$ 5,150.00 12 checks	\$ 2,400.00 12 checks
PICKETT, IRISH B	\$ 5,150.00 12 checks	\$ 2,400.00 12 checks
RICHARDS, FRANK H	\$ 2,275.00 6 checks	\$ 1,200.00 6 checks

FY 2022

BOARD MEMBER NAME	MONTHLY STIPEN	MONTHLY TRAVEL	TOTAL
BUIE, BARBARA J	\$ 5,150.00 12 checks	\$ 2,400.00 12 checks	\$ 900.00

GILL, KEISHA	\$ 5,000.00	12 checks	\$ 2,400.00	12 checks	\$ 900.00
MAYNOR, DELLA	\$ 5,100.00	12 checks	\$ 2,400.00	12 checks	\$ 900.00
MCRAE, ROSA M	\$ 5,300.00	12 checks	\$ 2,400.00	12 checks	\$ 900.00
PICKETT, IRISH B	\$ 5,300.00	12 checks	\$ 2,400.00	12 checks	\$ 900.00

FY 2023

**BOARD MEMBER NAME**

BLUE, CATHERINE	\$ 3,075.00	7 Checks	\$ 1,400.00	7 checks	\$ 600.00
BUIE, BARBARA J	\$ 2,225.00	5 checks	\$ 1,000.00	5 checks	
CASTELLON, RUBEN	\$ 3,075.00	7 Checks	\$ 1,400.00	7 checks	\$ 600.00
GILL, KEISHA	\$ 5,300.00	12 checks	\$ 2,400.00	12 checks	\$ 1,200.00
MAYNOR, DELLA	\$ 2,175.00	5 checks	\$ 1,000.00	5 checks	
MCRAE, ROSA M	\$ 5,250.00	12 checks	\$ 2,400.00	12 checks	\$ 1,200.00
PICKETT, IRISH B	\$ 2,400.00	5 checks	\$ 1,000.00	5 checks	
SOUTHERLAND, ANGELA	\$ 3,225.00	7 Checks	\$ 1,400.00	7 checks	\$ 600.00

*Covid Stipend 12/20/2021*    \$ 900.00    *Covid Stipend 6/10/2022*  
*Covid Stipend 12/20/2021*    \$ 900.00    *Covid Stipend 6/10/2022*  
*Covid Stipend 12/20/2021*    \$ 900.00    *Covid Stipend 6/10/2022*  
*Covid Stipend 12/20/2021*    \$ 900.00    *Covid Stipend 6/10/2022*

*Retention Bonus 1/13/23*    \$ 4,000.00    *Retention Bonus 6/2/23*

*Retention Bonus 1/13/23*    \$ 4,000.00    *Retention Bonus 6/2/23*

*Retention Bonus 1/13/23*    \$ 4,000.00    *Retention Bonus 6/2/23*

*Retention Bonus 1/13/23*    \$ 4,000.00    *Retention Bonus 6/2/23*

*Retention Bonus 1/13/23*    \$ 4,000.00    *Retention Bonus 6/2/23*