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Partly cloudy, breezy and mild. High 41, low 30.

**Lottery**

**New York**

Evening: 850 Win Four: 2772  
 Midday: 622 Win Four: 0845  
 Pick 10: 8-18-21-22-23-30-32-35-37-41-42-46-58-59-60-61-64-66-78-79  
 Take 5: 1-4-16-21-30-32

**New Jersey**

Pick 3: 476 Pays \$269.50  
 Box: \$44.50 Pairs: \$26.50  
 Pick Four: 7950  
 Pays \$2,294.50 Box: \$95.50  
 Cash 5: 1-6-19-25-28  
 Pick 6: 4-15-22-25-29-44

**Connecticut**

Daily Number: 195  
 Play Four: 0214  
 Cash 5: 1-22-24-25-33

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# Ed Board perks

## \$580G per member for staff and cars

By ALISON GENDAR  
DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER

They get paid only \$15,000 a year, but the city's seven Board of Education members cost taxpayers \$580,000 apiece, thanks to extensive staffs, pricey assistants, chauffeured cars and other perks.

This costly overhead is under new scrutiny as the state Legislature debates whether to eliminate the board and give its powers to the mayor.

At a time when schools are eliminating math tutors and after-school reading programs, critics argue that the city can no longer afford the board.

A Daily News examination of current budget records reveals the city spends slightly more than \$4 million a year on the seven-member board and its staff of 30.

That's \$580,934 per member. Although board members are paid an annual stipend of \$15,000 for the part-time post — with the president receiving \$20,000 — that's just the beginning.

Each gets an expansive office on the 11th floor of 110 Livingston St., staffed with a \$106,569-a-year assistant and a secretary who earns between \$42,000 and \$60,000 a year, according to records for the current fiscal year.

As board president, Ninfa Segarra has two personal assistants and two secretaries. In August, Segarra hired a third assistant, who earns \$59,816 a year — just as Chancellor Harold Levy ordered the 32 local school districts to cut \$180 million from their budgets.

**Luxury cars, drivers**

Besides personal staff, members share a secretary and a lawyer, each earning \$147,700, and a deputy counsel who is paid \$107,016. These managers shepherd the board's meetings, agendas, letters and policy debates with their own staff of 11 administrative assistants and 10 part-time clerks, according to payroll records.

The cost of these staff members and supplies for the board works out to \$3,738,992 a year.

Then there is the car pool.

Board members have the use of luxury city sedans and drivers, who also serve as bodyguards — a bonus that's budgeted at \$327,547 for this school year. The cars come with a set of emergency lights and sirens



**BOARD BUDGET, FISCAL '02**

Staff and supplies: **\$3,738,992**

Seven bodyguard/drivers, car maintenance, overtime: **\$327,547**

Total: **\$4,066,539**  
or **\$580,934** per member



From top l.: School Board members Ninfa Segarra, Irene Impellizzeri, Sandra Lerner, Jerry Cammarata, Edison Jackson, Terri Thomson, Irving Hamer Jr.

Board of Education President Ninfa Segarra arrives at Brooklyn headquarters. Each of seven board members gets use of city car and driver.

**EDITORIAL**

**It's beyond hypocrisy**  
PAGE 32

that board members can use to cut through traffic.

Although the cars are supposed to be used to transport board members about the city on school-related business, the pool operates on an honor system and has little oversight.

There also are other extras, such as cell phones and \$400 BlackBerry pagers that allow board members to read and send E-mail. The cell phones and pagers together cost about \$20,000 a year, according to average annual estimates.

The seven members serve as a board of directors for city schools, hiring chancellors, setting education policy, adopting budgets, selecting school sites and disciplining staff.

Critics say they too often waste time on petty infighting, building a political power base or pestering the chancellor with requests for minutiae.

# under fire



## OTHER WAYS TO SPEND THE \$4M

The Board of Education spends \$4 million a year on its seven members and extensive staff. Some examples of what that money could buy:

- 92** rookie teachers (with benefits)
- 121,212** hours of after-school tutoring in math and reading
- Library spending for **653,594** students at twice current levels
- 2,352** laptop computers
- 210** classroom aides
- 11,904** hours of teacher training
- 88,000** 10th-grade chemistry textbooks
- 13,333** Kaplan SAT prep courses
- 77** school nurses
- 575,539** paperback copies of "Gulliver's Travels"

Figures for fiscal year 2002; July 1, 2001, to June 30, 2002.

But former and current board members say many of the extras, such as cars and drivers, are provided as a courtesy for a part-time job that can soak up dozens of hours a week.

### Aides research policy

They also say the individual aides are needed to field hundreds of parent complaints the board members receive each week, as well as to do research for more complex policy changes, such as the board's recent overhaul of bilingual education.

But many of the fringe benefits have especially infuriated parents whose children have lost after-school reading and math tutoring, art programs and classroom aides.

"They should cut nonessentials such as cars and drivers for board members before they go for the meat of what our kids' education is all about," said Leonie Haimson, whose daughter's East Side

**"They should cut nonessentials such as cars and drivers for board members before they go for the meat of what our kids' education is all about."**

LEONIE HAIMSON

Middle School in Manhattan lost its after-school program to budget cuts.

In contrast, the 17 trustees who set policy for the City University of New York are unpaid and do not get chauffeured cars or personal staff.

Neither do the Port Authority's 12 commissioners, though they do get a

free E-ZPass for tunnels and bridges.

"Frankly, I just don't see the need for these kinds of niceties and perks. No other board that I know of gets those kinds of extras," said Assemblyman Steven Sanders (D-Manhattan), chairman of the Education Committee.

Sanders is on a task force studying alternatives to the Board of Ed. The group is expected to make recommendations next month to Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver (D-Manhattan). The Legislature has final word on any change.

While Sanders said he doubted there would be a consensus to eliminate the board, he said any reconfigured board should be stripped of its personal staff, stipends and chauffeured cars.

"Those kinds of perks seem to get in the way of education," Sanders said.

Silver is widely thought to favor an expanded board — an idea pushed by the city's teachers union — with the mayor

naming the additional members. The mayor now appoints two members, and the borough presidents pick the other five.

An expanded but perk-free board would give the mayor more control but preserve a pipeline for public involvement, said United Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten, another member of Silver's task force.

"What should be changed is the perks. Get rid of them. They don't need staff and cars and stipends," she said.

But other panelists said a larger board — even without perks — would be a disaster.

"A seven-member board drains time, money and energy away from the real task of school reform," said Kathryn Wylde, president of the New York City Partnership, a business advocacy organization, and a member of Silver's committee. "An 11-member board would be even worse."