

Suburban Journals – Newspaper Clipping

The Special School District's Board of Education was criticized last week by an employee and a spokesperson for a teachers' association due to a cost saving measure approved by the board in June.

The measure changed how 115 diagnosticians, who perform assessments on SSD students, are paid for their work in the summer.

Under terms of the policy approved June 28, district diagnosticians will be paid \$27.50 an hour, as opposed to the flat salary they receive during the nine-month school year.

The policy also cuts diagnosticians' summer workday by an hour and a half. Marilyn Lamb, an employee with the district and a member of a district diagnostic team, spoke at the July 12 board meeting and asked the board to reconsider the measure.

Lamb said six-hour workdays are not long enough to complete the required work. In addition, there are questions regarding whether the district is dealing in good faith with employees.

Lamb's comment refers to the fact that salary negotiations between district employees and officials have been going on since March.

Speaking after the board meeting, Connie Veasman, a spokesperson for the National Education Association, said she thinks the new policy has a discriminatory aspect to it, namely that it would discourage diagnosticians in higher income brackets from choosing to work during the summer.

Veasman said diagnosticians are paid during the regular school year on a salaried basis, which means their pay is relative to how long they have been in the district and what type of degree they have.

Some experienced diagnosticians are likely not to work during the summer because of the lower wage, whereas those who are on the lower end of the salary scale will work because it constitutes a raise, said Veasman.

Veasman said she does not think diagnosticians should be paid more or less for doing the same job just because they are working at a different time. Essentially, diagnosticians are asking for a contract that covers 12 months instead of nine.