

### Dear Neighbor:

Test scores are going down, enrollment is declining, veteran principals are leaving, and taxes are continuing to rise. There's an uncomfortable truth that more people in our town need to know: **all is not well in Evanston's public schools.**

We are a diverse group of Evanstonians—parents, teachers, longtime residents, and proud D65 & ETHS alumni—who are deeply concerned about the state of our public schools.

We've created this newsletter, which aggregates data about D65 & D202 and summarizes reporting on schools from our local papers, to help more Evanstonians get a picture of what is happening.

This issue revisits a troubling story from last year: how D65 spent over \$500,000 on a personal security detail for Superintendent Devon Horton—even though, according to the Evanston police and some of his own colleagues, there was no real threat.

## D65 Paid More than \$500,000 for Personal Armed Bodyguard Service for Superintendent

["I sit here with armed security 24 hours a day."](#) That remark by D65 Supt. Devon Horton at a May 2022 school board meeting caught the attention of *Evanston Now* reporter Jeff Hirsh. Yet D65 provided no details about the cost of the armed security, the duration of the service, or who was providing it.

So Hirsh submitted a FOIA that revealed that Supt. Horton had a dedicated, around-the-clock armed security detail that cost nearly \$50,000 a month and had started almost a year earlier. *Evanston Now* calculated that the security, provided by Skokie's Phoenix Security, [would cost over \\$500,000](#)—an unacceptably high amount, according to critics, given that the District has been forced to eliminate student-facing positions due to budget constraints.

In response to the reporting, District 65 said the measures were necessary because of threats directed at the Superintendent. But the District provided no specifics about the nature of the threats. Another FOIA filed by *Evanston Now* obtained 40+ e-mail and phone messages received by Horton and D65 Board members over a two-year period. While the voice and e-mail messages are offensive, Evanston police and even some of the District 65 officials who received the threats did not consider them directly threatening, according to a follow-up [Evanston Now story](#).



**The elections for D65 and D202 Boards are Tuesday, April 4.**

It falls during Spring Break, so if you will be out of town, please remember to vote early or vote by mail. Stay tuned for more from ESU on the elections.

Thank you to the many people who have already signed up online to receive this newsletter.

If you haven't yet signed up, please go to [www.evanston-schools-update.org](http://www.evanston-schools-update.org). And feel free to share this issue or the previous one.

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