

9/18/67 FF 21

1221

REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS
OF FACT-FINDER

In re: Hamtramck Public Schools
and
Hamtramck Federation of
Teachers #1052
Thomas LoCicero

State University
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Pursuant to Notice of Appointment as a Fact-Finding Hearings Officer dated September 12, 1967, the undersigned conferred separately and at length with both the Hamtramck School Board and the Federation Bargaining Committee, and at a joint session of some sixteen hours, attempted to clarify and bring into the open all material facts relative to the dispute. Serious efforts were also made to come to an agreement, but it became apparent to me that any further effort at that time would be wasted.

The Teachers' Committee contends it must obtain for the members salaries commensurate with their profession, which they interpret to mean at a level substantially above the average paid to teachers in the Wayne County area. They attempt to justify this by the fact that they are required to teach in extremely dilapidated surroundings and with poor facilities and further by the claim that teachers generally are far underpaid everywhere and therefore must hold out for very substantial gains at this time. They also contend that their demands must be satisfied at the expense of other non-teaching employees, such as custodial workers, and in preference to expenditures for repairs and remodelling needs, replacement of furniture and equipment, and new text-book requirements; that the latter expenditures must be further deferred to upgrade the

Hamtramck Public Schools

salaries and fringe benefits of the teachers, and that more realistic and serious efforts must be made by the Board to induce the citizens of Hamtramck to approve increased millage to pay for the repairs, remodelling etc.

The Board contends that it is faced with a terrible dilemma in that its school plants, furniture, equipment and facilities are in a deplorable state and condemned for lack of upkeep and repairs, that one school building, the Pulaski School, has had to be torn down, and that the others are in a similar state, that they have borrowed \$550,000 in anticipation of the collection of operating taxes, to finance pay increases and are under order of the Michigan Municipal Finance Commission not to increase such borrowings and to eliminate the need therefor in the future. It further points out that an increase in millage submitted to the people on June 19, 1967 was denied and contend that this year's income can in no way justify or permit any increase; that nevertheless it did originally offer to grant an increase in salaries of \$300.00 across the board, which was substantially increased during our last negotiations to a graduated increase of from \$500 to \$1,000 per year based on years of service, as scheduled in Appendix A, attached.

In the hope of "finding more money", a very detailed analysis and study of the proposed budget for this year was made, from which the Union concluded that some \$213,000 to \$246,000 was available. However, to make this money available, all expenditures

for replacement of equipment and furniture, for remodelling and improvement of buildings, would be eliminated; the staff of thirty-seven custodial employees would be reduced to twenty-two, a switchboard operator, storeroom manager and station wagon driver positions would be discontinued, a repair crew of seven employees would be reduced to five, text-book and supply purchases would be reduced as well as the clerical staff. The Union further concludes that the teaching staff of 156 teachers last year, now reduced to 142 by the elimination of the Pulaski School and a reduction in the number of students, could be further reduced by ten teachers because they have not yet been hired, and it is claimed cannot be obtained. The last offer of the Teachers' Committee requires a salary range far above that offered by the Board, as scheduled in Appendix B attached.

FINDINGS

A. LONG RANGE PROBLEM

1. No one denies the fact that the plant facilities are in a deplorable state. A report by Michigan State University, published in December, 1966 based on a detailed study of the School System at the request of the Board of Education says:

"- - - There are many serious deficiencies in all segments of the Hamtramck school system. In medical terminology, the patient may be considered critically ill and requiring intensive care. Although the Hamtramck schools merit praise in certain aspects of their program, the general conclusion of the Michigan State University survey is that the educational program is largely inadequate by modern standards. Major improvements are necessary if the children of the school district are to successfully compete in today's society.

"Not only must curriculum development and improvement begin immediately, but facility replacement and renovation must be given high priorities in order to comply with even the most minimal educational, health and safety criteria and to end the wasteful high maintenance and operational costs resulting from an obsolete school plant."

2. Not only are facilities poor, but the curriculum is strongly criticized by the M.S.U. Report which says:

"The offerings at the elementary and secondary school levels can best be summarized as minimal and marginal."

"In summary, the quality of the educational program in Hamtramck as identified by teachers and administrators rated below average, yet Hamtramck is definitely not a poor district financially. It has the resources to dramatically raise the quality of education and improve the relationships between school and community. The fundamental answer seems to lie in the attitudes toward education held by the community, its Board of Education, its administrators and its teaching staff. Furthermore, there is an obvious lack of adequate communication between the school system and the community. Without meaningful communication, there can be no enthusiasm and no public support. The initial take-off point, then, must be that of getting the Board and the staff to change long-standing attitudes, they have held about each other and work towards a basis of better understanding in order to improve the image of the schools in the eyes of the school public."

3. It is further my belief that rather than improve, the relationship between the Board and the Staff has deteriorated further and that the exceedingly low morale of the staff and lack of communication and understanding has worsened. The refusal of the electorate to approve a millage increase and the extremely high salary goals of the teachers are at the root of this deterioration.

4. Hamtramck's School problem is of course basically due to lack of funds. But this is because the taxpayers are not

contributing enough money to permit keeping the school system up-to-date. While it is true that the City is populated with many retirees and low-income families, it is also true that almost 80% of the local property tax income is paid by commercial and industrial corporations. Yet Hamtramck's school tax rate is 40th out of 43 school districts in Wayne County, but ranks 5th in order of wealth per pupil. Its school tax millage rate now is 15.90 per thousand for operation while that of comparable districts is far above. Obviously, for future development and improvement, it is imperative that taxpayers be convinced that they must contribute more like their neighbors to satisfy the modern requirements of their school children.

B. IMMEDIATE PROBLEM

Much of the argument between the Board and the Teachers' Committee revolves around the above facts. Each blames the other for lack of public tax support. But this argument will not solve the immediate dilemma nor return the children to school now. Relative to this dilemma, I find that:

1. Since 1965, progress has been made in raising teachers' salaries somewhat in line with local competition. For the School year 1966-67, primarily as the result of a serious dispute, the rates for teachers with an A.B. degree ranged from \$5,700 to \$9,100 and for those with an M.A. from \$6,100 to \$9,900. As a comparison, the average for 40 school districts in this area

averaged for "A.B.'s" \$5,688 to \$9,134 and for "M.A.'s" \$6,128 to \$9,997.

Using the same districts where settlements have been completed, for comparison this year, I find that the average for an A.B. is from \$6,205 to \$9,954, and for an M.A. from \$6,652 to \$10,905.

2. The School Board, in its budget for 1967-1968 has estimated an expenditure for regular teacher salaries totalling \$1,107,411, based on last year's salary rates. This figure is for a total of 142 teachers, 132 of whom have been hired and 10 of whom have not. Even though this estimate does not include any increase in pay for teachers, the budget results in a net current deficit of \$34,500, using up a cash balance from last year of \$103,400, and continuing a short term loan outstanding of \$550,000. Of course, this means that an increase of any amount must come from:

- a. the discontinuance of some additional services, since the Board has already discontinued the services of health services, including salaries for doctor, nurses, health coordinator and related expenses for which \$34,366 was spent last year;
- b. The possible increase of pupils, although a decrease is expected by the Board;
- c. the elimination of some custodial, clerical and other existing jobs in preference to the reduction of teaching personnel by the ten teacher positions not yet filled.

- d. the elimination or reduction of expenditures for replacement of furniture, equipment and supplies; and
 - e. the elimination of expenditures for remodelling and repair of buildings.
3. The failure to hire the 10 teachers not yet hired, will result in the necessity of holding one-half day sessions in order to handle the class-room assignments.
4. In addition to salary increase demands, the Teachers' Committee has presented some 20 items, some of which involve substantial expenditures and others of which are changes in contract provisions and rights. Among these are:
- a. Agency Shop Clause
 - b. Increase in Sick Leave Allowance from 12 days to 15 days per school year
 - c. Deletion of the No-Strike clause in the present contract. The reason for this request, even though the contract might provide for binding arbitration, is that the Committee "believes the contract will be violated immediately after being signed and therefore, the Union wants to be free to strike upon any such violation."
 - d. Discontinuance of the teacher's present responsibility to collect for books as being "unprofessional" and for which they believe non-teacher personnel should be hired.
 - e. Class-sizes should be further reduced at least in the Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd, 3rd grades (from 20 to a maximum of 25) and in Grades 4, 5 and 6 (from 25 to a maximum of 30).
 - f. Tuition for classes taken by teachers in other colleges to be paid by the School District.
 - g. Salaries for Summer School classes to be paid in proportion to salaries for Winter School.

- h. Four paid holidays, Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's Day and Memorial Day. This item would involve an additional cost of \$27,720.00.
- i. Weekly-disability insurance which now pays a teacher \$35 per week to be increased to three-quarters of the teacher's salary.
- j. Severance Pay, now equal to 50% of 100 days of accumulated sick leave days in the bank, to be increased to 100% of such sick leave bank.
- k. Blue-Cross - Blue Shield insurance coverage to be provided for retirees.

An additional group of changes demanded are not necessary to be enumerated in this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In making the following recommendations, I believe the following factors should be considered:

- 1. That schools must reopen at the earliest possible moment and certainly early enough to avoid any loss of revenue from State Aid.
- 2. That the Hamtramck School teachers must be paid reasonable salaries, in keeping with those paid in this area.
- 3. That although the repairing and remodelling of buildings and the replacement of furniture and equipment are of great and immediate importance to maintain a safe and healthy plant for the children, it will mean nothing if the buildings are empty.
- 4. That although the school tax rate is out of

proportion to the needs of the school system, its increase is a matter of long-range planning.

5. That to create a further deficit may involve serious difficulties with the Michigan Finance Commission.

I, THEREFORE, RECOMMEND THAT:

1. The following salary scale be adopted, giving Hamtramck School teachers the average of school districts in the Wayne County area, thus maintaining its position of last year.

	<u>A.B.</u>		<u>M.A.</u>
1st year	6200	1st year	6600
2nd year	6500	2nd year	6900
3rd year	6800	3rd year	7300
4th year	7200	4th year	7700
5th year	7600	5th year	8100
6th year	8000	6th year	8500
7th year	8400	7th year	8900
8th year	8900	8th year	9400
9th year	9400	9th year	9900
10th year	9900	10th year	10900

This schedule will give teachers an increase of at least \$800 a year and a maximum of \$1,500 including earned increments, and will cost the School District about \$120,000. In my judgment this is the lowest possible salary schedule which will induce the teachers to commence teaching; and it should provide them with an incentive to be dedicated professionally since they would be receiving a salary increase equal to the majority of other teachers in other districts. Under the facts and circumstances

existing in this district this is quite an accomplishment.

2. This additional cost must be met by a combination of economies.

- a. If the 10 teacher vacancies are not filled, some \$70,000 will be provided toward this cost. Chances are that at least some will be filled and some for the second semester, which may release some funds. These, together with economies suggested below should produce the necessary revenue.
- b. If they should all be filled now, then some drastic economies in custodial help, in replacement of equipment and furniture, in repair and remodeling of buildings, in every other possible dispensable position must be exercised and if these do not prove to be enough, then consideration should be given to reduction of the school day to one-half day.
- c. In the meantime if enrollments should be greater than expected, as occurred last year, then an additional sum of money would be available at the rate of about \$1,470 for each 10 students over 3,400.
- d. To the extent that the foregoing measures cannot or are not accomplished, the estimated deficit of \$34,500 will go as high as \$175,000, and will require justification of such inability to the Michigan Finance Commission. With the extreme efforts being

made by Superintendent John E. Tischuk and the School Board, I cannot believe that the Commission would further penalize and restrict the District. The facts and circumstances surrounding this district are too clear and too compelling to further hold up the opening of school.

3. If the suggested salary schedule is accepted by both parties by Tuesday Noon, September 19th, 1967, teachers shall report for work on Wednesday morning and students will report for classes either on Thursday or Friday, as it may be deemed possible by the School Board.
4. The remaining demands will then be submitted to a Board of Arbitration mutually acceptable to the parties, and if they cannot agree on the composition of such Arbitration Board, then they are to be named one by the School Board and one by the Union, the two so designated to name a third who would act as chairman. Such arbitration would be binding on both parties.
5. I further strongly recommend that a Citizens' Committee be immediately organized, including representatives of the School Board and teachers, representatives of the City Administration and of P.T.A. organizations, and especially of industrial and commercial interests in the City to bring to the attention of the taxpayers and citizens of Hamtramck

the deplorable and deteriorating state of school affairs and to plan and promulgate a School Improvement Plan to assure the young people and families of this community that better education and facilities are on the way, but must be paid for to get them.

Respectfully submitted,


Thomas V. LoCicero

Fact-Finding Officer

Dated: September 18, 1967

	<u>A.B.</u>		<u>M.A.</u>
1st Year	6100	1st Year	6500
2nd Year	6400	2nd Year	6800
3rd Year	6800	3rd Year	7200
4th Year	7300	4th Year	7700
5th Year	7700	5th Year	8100
6th Year	8200	6th Year	8600
7th Year	8500	7th Year	9300
8th Year	8900	8th Year	9700
9th Year	9300	9th Year	10,200
10th Year	9700	10th Year	10,700

SCHEDULE A

School Board's Last Offer

	<u>A.B.</u>		<u>M.A.</u>
1st Year	6500	1st Year	7000
2nd Year	6900	2nd Year	7400
3rd Year	7300	3rd Year	7800
4th Year	7700	4th Year	8300
5th Year	8100	5th Year	8800
6th Year	8500	6th Year	9300
7th Year	8900	7th Year	9800
8th Year	9400	8th Year	10,300
9th Year	9900	9th Year	10,800
10th Year	10,400	10th Year	11,300

SCHEDULE "B"

Teachers' Last Proposal