

3/1/83 FF

MICHIGAN EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS COMMISSION
IN THE MATTER OF THE FACT-FINDING BETWEEN
NORTHERN MICHIGAN EDUCATION ASSOC.

-and-

MERC Case No. 82-1529

TRAVERSE CITY AREA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

* * Mark Glazer * * 3-1-83 * * *

FINDINGS OF FACT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

APPEARANCES:

For the Association: Lyle Painter, UniServ Director

For the Union : Ronald Fite, Asst. Superintendent

ISSUES:

I.

ADMINISTRATIVE SENIORITY

II.

CLASS SIZE

III.

INSURANCE

IV.

SALARY

Michigan State University
LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL
RELATIONS LIBRARY

Traverse City Area Public Schools

BACKGROUND

On November 4, 1982, the Northern Michigan Education Association and the Traverse City Area Public School District Board of Education jointly petitioned the Michigan Employment Relations Commission for Fact Finding pursuant to the inability of the parties to resolve disputed contractual matters after both good faith bargaining and mediation. The undersigned was thereupon selected to act as Fact Finder under MERC Rule 34(1). A pre-trial conference was held in Traverse City on January 9, 1983 and formal Fact Finding transpired on February 4 - 5, 1983. Prior thereto, various pre-hearing matters were considered and ruled upon by the Fact Finder on or before February 3, 1983. Also, the parties succeeded in resolving several issues subsequent to the initial pre-trial and prior to formal fact finding.

There are 389 employees affected by these proceedings including all certified full-time and regularly employed part-time teaching personnel, including department chairpersons, guidance counselors, and librarians employed by the Traverse City Board of Education. Extensive evidence and testimony was presented by the Board and the Association at the Fact Finding hearing in a public session spanning two days. In addition to the presentation of Mr. Painter, Messrs. Thomas Stokes and Robert Lewellyn acted as advocates for the Association. Numerous witnesses appeared and testified, and over 100 Exhibits were introduced into evidence.

To enable the parties to complete the hearing as scheduled, the Association's financial case was stipulated into the record. It is uncontroverted, based upon this record, that Traverse City ranks near the bottom of comparable communities in terms of salary paid to its teachers.

The parties thereupon adopted a verbal agreement under the direction of the Fact Finder, and the results were sequestered pending release of the written findings of fact and recommendations thereto.

I.

ADMINISTRATIVE SENIORITY

Findings of Fact After carefully reviewing the evidence, I am persuaded that the Association's proposal best comports with the evidence presented.

Recommendation The position of the Association on the issue of Administrative Seniority should be adopted.

II.

CLASS SIZE

Findings of Fact This is a complex issue that has resulted in a tentative agreement on various aspects. On the remaining issues, the evidence best supports the Board's position.

Recommendation On the remaining issues, the Board's proposals on the issue of class size should be adopted.

III.

INSURANCE

Findings of Fact I find that the proofs support the insurance proposal of the Association with the modification that a committee undertake an examination of the cost of fringe benefits as suggested by the Board. The rapid increase in insurance premium costs show that there is a need to study cost containment possibilities of fringe benefits.

Recommendation I recommend that the insurance proposal of the Association be accepted. In addition, a letter of agreement between the Association and the Board should be implemented wherein the parties would appoint a

joint Management-Association committee to explore, study, and issue a report on insurance alternatives, including ways to contain the cost of fringe benefits.

IV.

SALARY

Findings of Fact The proofs clearly indicate that Traverse City ranks near the bottom of Michigan School Districts of similar size in terms of salary paid to its teachers and in operational millage levied. To ameliorate this situation, a modest increase should be implemented..

Recommendation In the calendar year 1982-1983 there should be a four percent (4%) increase on step along with the approximate 1.6% increment. In the calendar year 1983-1984 there should be a four percent (4%) increase on step along with the approximate 1.6% increment.


MARK J. GLAZER, Fact Finder

Dated: March 1, 1983