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In re:

ALLEN PARK PUBLIC SCHOOLS

-and-

ALLEN PARK ASSOCIATION OF  
EDUCATIONAL SECRETARIES

OPINION AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF FACT FINDER

George T. Rounell, Jr., Fact Finder

APPEARANCES:

ALLEN PARK PUBLIC SCHOOLS:

Richard Hogancamp, Superintendent of Schools  
Dan Burke, Director of Office Services

ALLEN PARK ASSOCIATION OF EDUCATIONAL SECRETARIES:

Zeda Williams, Allen Park Educational Secretaries  
Richard W. Croll, Urban Representative, M.E.A.  
Dorothy Mayer, Allen Park Secretary  
Irene Roach, Allen Park Secretary (Elementary)

On a joint Petition filed by the Allen Park Public Schools (herein sometimes called "Public Schools") and the Allen Park Association of Educational Secretaries (herein sometimes called "Association"), the undersigned was appointed Fact Finder in the dispute between the Public Schools and the Association.

The Association and the Schools are entering the second year of a two-year collective bargaining agreement. The dispute centers around a so-called "re-opener" clause in the contract that provides at the end of the first year for a re-opener as to economic issues.

*Allen Park Public Schools*

There are two economic issues before me as Fact Finder. The first issue deals with the question of longevity pay. The second deals with salary increases.

Before I make any recommendations some background is necessary. As the parties know, I was the appointed Fact Finder in the dispute between the Allen Park Public Schools and the Allen Park Federation of Teachers. In connection with that dispute I became familiar with the Schools' position on longevity pay. I also became familiar with the Schools' financial position.

In recent years the Board has engaged in deficit financing. It has encountered a debt of \$360,000.00. As a result, the Schools in good faith went to the voters of the Allen Park School District and asked for a renewal of a seven mill operational millage and an additional seven mills operational millage. This was done at a time when throughout Michigan many millages were being defeated. Yet, the Schools' Board of Education realized that it had to go to the citizens and get the funds that it desperately needed. As a result, the citizens did renew the seven mills and voted the additional seven mills

This millage gave the Schools additional funds for the current year. Obviously, as represented to the voters, and as required by the Michigan Municipal Finance Commission, part of these voted monies had to be used to pay back the deficit. The Schools' Board has committed itself to pay back this deficit in four yearly installments, namely \$90,000.00 a year. As a result of the negotiations with the teachers during the current year, plus the obligation to pay back the aforementioned \$90,000.00 a year, the Board now finds itself approaching or at deficit financing even though it is yet faced with the economic

demands of the Association and of Local 142 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees which represent the maintenance and engineering staff of the Public Schools.

It is with this background that I approach the economic issues raised in this fact finding.

Salary. The Board has offered to the secretaries at each level \$120.00 increase across-the-board. As will be explained fuller below, the Schools also recommended that longevity pay be dropped. The Schools package, therefore, to the secretaries represents \$3,500.00 in additional monies. It is quite clear from what I have said as to background, that even the Schools offer will technically put the Schools in deficit financing or limit the Board's ability to pay back the \$90,000.00 a year that it has suggested it intends to do.

The secretaries position is that they should increase their longevity pay and they should receive the same percentage increase on the base as did the teachers. The secretaries represent that this would mean an increase of 11%. But on closer examination it is found that the teachers' increase represented 10.5% of the base increase. A total package of the secretaries proposal would cost the Board approximately \$12,500.00.

Historically speaking, the secretaries, at least in the last two or three years, have not received the same rate percentage-wise as have the teachers. This has probably been so because relatively speaking the teachers were paid comparatively low as compared to the secretaries whose wages were somewhat comparable with other employers in the area. For example, during the 1967-68 school year, the teachers

received a 8.5% increase, whereas, the secretaries received 6.5% increase. The year previous to 67-68, the secretaries received approximately a 4% increase, whereas, the teachers received substantially more.

Thus, as I find the parties historically, the secretaries have not received the same amount increases as have the teachers.

This is not to say that the secretaries were not important to the school system as contrasted to teachers. The secretaries are indeed important. But the fact remains that the secretaries' salaries have been more competitive than those of the teachers.

The secretaries are classified according to levels; levels 1 through 4. The secretaries placement on a level schedule depends on the office she is working with primarily because various locations require more skills. For example, level 1 involves the Board of Education offices, plus one secretary in the high school. As was explained to the Fact Finder, the secretaries in the central office do more bookkeeping than the secretaries in other offices. On the other hand, the secretaries classified in level 4 are elementary school secretaries who do very little shorthand and whose duties are somewhat limited. They also work less weeks per year.

I have also compared the position of the secretaries at each of the levels as compared with various other school districts. I find that as presently paid the secretaries on all levels compare favorably

Footnote 1 - Originally there were five levels of secretarial help in the District, however, the level 5 has been eliminated.

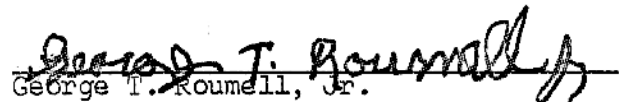
with other school districts. Furthermore, the recommendation I am about to make will keep them on a favorable comparison and yet be fairly consistent with the financial problems of this particular school district.

As I indicated above, I believe I am correct in saying that historically there is no basis that the secretaries automatically get the same raises percentage-wise as teachers. On the other hand, the secretaries should get a raise that keeps up with the cost-of-living and is over and above the cost-of-living.

Therefore, I am recommending that the secretaries on levels 1 through 3 receive a 8 1/2% increase over the equivalent step on last year's salary schedule, and that the secretaries because the demands on them are not as great in level 4 receive 7 1/2% increases. These increases are more than last year. They are consistent with the historical practice in this district, and they are over and above the cost-of-living adjustments. This will mean that the Schools will be paying approximately \$5,000.00 more than their offer. It will mean that the Board will have to look into its budget and try to cut back in other areas to provide these wages for the secretaries. But under the circumstances, I think these wages are fair.

Longevity. The Board, of course, wishes to eliminate longevity pay. But longevity pay among the secretaries has been part of the employment conditions in the Allen Park School District for some time. I realize that the longevity pay represents more money for the Board to pay the teachers. However, because this is an economic re-opener and because it is possible at the end of next year the parties

might re-evaluate all phases of their contract, and because longevity has been a long established practice, I would recommend that the longevity provisions stay as they are now and that there be no changes.

  
George T. Roumell, Jr.  
Fact Finder

Dated: October 18, 1968