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Before the Public Employment Relations Commission  
State of Washington

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MERIDIAN SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 505

Employer,

vs

MERIDIAN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Labor Organization.

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In the Matter of Factfinding between the Meridian School District and the Meridian Education Association.

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OPINION AND FINDINGS

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Wallace M. Rudolph  
Factfinder  
8811 South Tacoma Way  
Tacoma, Wash. 98499

This is a factfinding under the Public Relations Commission between Meridian School District No. 505 and the Meridian Education Association. Under the 41.56.440 RCW, the Factfinder is to consider:

- (a) The constitutional and statutory authority of the employer.
- (b) Stipulations of the parties.
- (c) Comparison of the wages, hours and conditions of employment of the uniformed personnel of cities and counties involved in the proceedings with the wages, hours, and conditions of employment of uniformed personnel of cities and counties respectively of similar size on the west coast of the United States.
- (d) The average consumer prices for goods and services, commonly known as the cost of living.
- (e) Changes in any of the foregoing circumstances during the pendency of the proceedings.
- (f) Such other factors, not confined to the foregoing, which are normally or traditionally taken into consideration in the determination of wages, hours, and conditions of employment.

At the hearing, the parties agreed to all issues except duration, assignment, vacancies and transfers, personal business leave and the form of salary schedule. Further, the evidence presented only referred to item C and the Factfinder has restricted his finding to that item.

The first issue between the parties is duration. The District wants two years and the Association wants one year. Since the only foreseeable major issue in the second year relates to money and

there is a tentative agreement that all state salary money is to be distributed as salary, there is no need to open negotiations for a new contract next year, if the nature of the pay schedule is settled this year. Thus, the Factfinder recommends that the duration be two years. To make this provision more palatable, it should include a maintenance of standards clause and a "zipper" clause.

On the issue of assignment, vacancies and transfers, the Association failed to put into evidence the practice in comparable school districts or the need for the provision that they proposed. Although the Factfinder recognizes that in the private industrial labor field such provisions are standard, he does not have sufficient evidence to determine the cost or usefulness of such a provision in school assignments. He, therefore, finds that the agreement in this issue should be the same as it was in the 1978-1979 agreement between the parties.

The third issue is personal leave. Again, the Association has not produced sufficient evidence to indicate the general use of such provisions in other districts or the cost of such a provision. In order to recommend the inclusion of such a provision in a contract, the Factfinder must know this information. Because of a lack of evidence on this point, the Factfinder recommends that the personal leave provision not be included in the 1979-1980 or 1980-1981 agreement.

The last and paramount issue is the pay schedule. The final

position of the Association provides for a 4 by 4 schedule and the District's final offer is a 4 by 2.5 schedule. The Association's position provides that the available salary money is distributed to people with experience, while the District's position is that the available money be used for the purpose of hiring the best new people in the market. Both of these positions have merit in the abstract.

The evidence, however, clearly indicates that the present District's schedule compared to other comparable schools heavily weights the total resources toward beginning teachers.

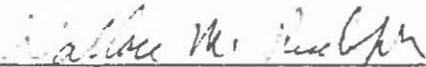
The historical reasons for this are clear but with the advent of state support and the existence of a buyer's market for teachers, there is less need to load a schedule for the benefit of new teachers. The Association exhibits clearly show that at all levels the senior people under the District's proposals are relatively worse off than beginning people when each group is compared to similar people in other districts. In addition, the Association's proposal is a modest one which does not heavily weight the money to senior people. Further, there was no evidence presented showing that the District was having any difficulty filling positions while there was evidence showing that persons with long periods of service were being deprived of pension money because of low pay at the highest end of the scale.

For these reasons, the Factfinder recommends that Association's proposal No. 2, a 4 by 4 schedule with a 1.80 index, be adopted

for the next two years.

Attached to this Opinion are Association exhibits 9 through 13 (Appendex D through H) and Meridian Education Association proposal No. 2 from Exhibit 3.

This Opinion and Findings rendered in Tacoma, Washington, on October 29, 1979.

  
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WALLACE M. RUDOLPH  
Factfinder