

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
AND
PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION

JOHN B. A. DOE

V.

WARWICK SCHOOL COMMITTEE

DECISION

**Held: Warwick graduation policy is not
arbitrary or unreasonable.**

Date: June 10, 1994

In the case at hand Student Doe agrees that he is one half credit short of the credits needed to graduate from high school in Warwick. His request to make-up this deficiency through tutoring between the end of classes in Warwick and the date set for graduation was denied by Warwick school authorities. These school authorities have also denied him permission to walk up on the stage during graduation ceremonies and receive a blank diploma pending completion of the requisite course work. Student Doe, however, was allowed to participate in all other senior functions. Student Doe stresses that he is not apt to attend college and that he and his family will be greatly distressed if he loses the opportunity to participate in the only graduation exercise potentially available to him.

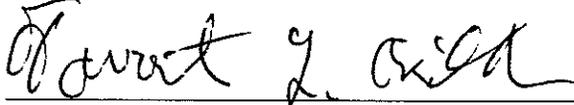
According to the testimony in this case Warwick has a settled and unvarying policy of refusing to allow students who have not completed all requirements for a diploma to participate in graduation exercises. Several principals from Warwick testified that while this policy is an unwritten one it has been stringently adhered to for at least the last 35 to 40 years. It is also Warwick policy not to allow students to make-up a failed course through tutoring between the last day of classes and the day set for graduation. Warwick feels that this is too short a time to realistically complete the work which would be required to remedy the course deficiency.

While Warwick policy on graduation ceremonies is stringent we can find no law or regulation which it violates. A policy of this sort certainly encourages completion of all course work and it serves to validate the achievement of those students who participate in the graduation exercise.

We also see nothing amiss in Warwick's judgment that a concentrated period of tutoring is not equivalent to a more extended period of instructions.

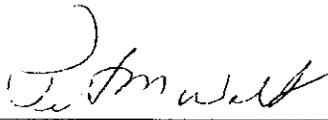
Conclusion

The request for interim relief must be denied.



Forrest L. Avila, Hearing Officer

Approved:



Peter McWalters, Commissioner

June 10, 1994
Date