

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
AND
PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION

IN RE: WEST WARWICK
PRINCIPALS' ASSOCIATION

DECISION

Held: Administrators' contract
established basic pay rate.

Date: July 21, 1995

In this case three recently promoted West Warwick school administrators are appealing the decision of the school committee to pay them lower step payments than they believe they were entitled to upon moving into their new posting. The dispute centers on the "projected 1994-1995 administration salary schedule" (S.C. 2) and the following language contained in the bargain agreement entered into between the West Warwick School Committee and the West Warwick Administrative Association:

Administrative reorganization/transfer, as a result of position changes or vacancies in the chain of command, will be the prerogative of the "Committee" after consultation with the "Association".

"Administrators" whose position changes as a result of Article IV A-2 will remain at the same pay and benefit status unless the new position held has a higher negotiated status.

It must be admitted that this language is more than a bit opaque. We conclude that it means that an administrator who moves to a new position continues to receive, at a minimum, the same amount of money (including step increases contained in the salary schedule) than they received in their prior position. For example, a third step elementary assistant principal under the negotiated salary schedule makes \$57,600. If this assistant principal were to be promoted to "Providence Street Principal" he or she would continue to receive at least \$57,600 even though first step in the new position pays only \$56,018.

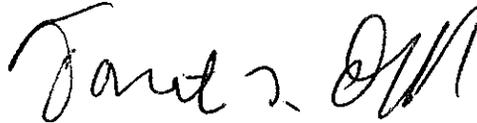
We also find that under the agreement the school committee has discretion to place an administrator on a higher step if it wishes to do so. Testimony supported the position that such step placements were based upon the experience of the candidate and the financial position of the school district.

Under our reading of the agreement we cannot accept the associations contention that an administrator who is at third step in one position is entitled to be

placed automatically at the third step in a new position to which they are promoted.

Conclusion

The appeal must be denied and dismissed.



Forrest L. Avila, Hearing Officer

Approved:



Peter McWalters, Commissioner

July 21, 1995

Date