

STATE OF WISCONSIN
BEFORE THE MEDIATOR-ARBITRATOR

JUN 23 1986

WISCONSIN EMPLOYMENT
RELATIONS COMMISSION

In the Matter of Arbitration Between
NORTHWEST UNITED EDUCATORS
and
PRAIRIE FARM SCHOOL DISTRICT

Case 10
No. 35588 MED/ARB-3467
Decision No. 23287-A

Arbitrator:
Gordon Haferbecker

APPEARANCES:

Alan D. Manson, Executive Director, Northwest United Educators, on behalf of the NUE/Union.

Michael J. Burke, Attorney at Law, Mulcahy & Wherry, S.C., on behalf of the District/Board/Employer.

BACKGROUND

This dispute concerns the negotiations over the collective bargaining agreement between the parties to replace their existing contract which expired September 30, 1985.

On July 25, 1985, the parties exchanged their initial proposals for a 1985-86 contract. Thereafter the parties met on two occasions in an effort to reach an agreement. On September 5, 1985, NUE filed a petition for Mediation-Arbitration pursuant to the Statutes. On November 19, 1985, Sharon A. Gallagher, a member of the Commission staff, conducted an investigation which reflected that the parties were deadlocked in their negotiations. On February 4, 1986, the parties submitted to the Investigator their final offers and Investigator Gallagher notified the Commission that the parties were still at impasse. On February 12, 1986, the Commission submitted a panel of five arbitrators to the parties from which they were to choose one. Gordon Haferbecker of Stevens Point was selected as Mediator-Arbitrator and the Commission notified the Arbitrator of his appointment on March 19, 1986.

On April 29, 1986 mediation was conducted by the Mediator-Arbitrator but was not successful in resolving the deadlock. The parties proceeded to arbitration on the same afternoon. Exhibits were presented and testimony was heard. It was agreed that briefs would be submitted jointly to the Arbitrator on May 23, 1986. Both briefs were received on May 29. The Union explained that the delay in the submission of the briefs was agreed upon between the representatives. It was also agreed that reply briefs, if filed, would be due by June 6, 1986.

Subsequent to the hearing, the Union submitted Supplemental Exhibits 1 through 7 concerning the 1985-86 salary settlement of Bruce in addition to other salary comparison information, two recent arbitration awards from

this arbitration concerns only a dispute over the 1985-86 salary schedule, there are actually two issues: 1) the amount the salaries will increase over 1984-85 (salary increase); and 2) the method to be used for calculating that increase (salary computations). The Board and Union proposals are attached as Appendix A.

The District proposes to increase each step of the salary schedule by a flat dollar amount--\$1,100. The Union proposes to increase each cell by a percentage--6.5%. The District calculates its total package cost to be 8.4% over the 1984-85 costs and the Union's to be 9.34%; and Board's offer to be an average teacher increase of \$2,172 and the Union's to be \$2,416.

SUMMARY OF PARTIES' POSITIONS

The parties, at the arbitration hearing and subsequent to it, provided considerable evidence for the Arbitrator to consider. The Union submitted 79 exhibits (some of which were multi-page documents) and the District also presented 79 exhibits. Each presented arguments for their case in the form of briefs submitted after the hearing, and the Union submitted a reply brief. In the briefs, both parties stressed the importance of the salary computation issue--dollar versus percentage increases. Both parties presented argument as to how their position on the salary increase was more reasonable. It is not practical for the Arbitrator to review in detail all of the data and arguments presented by the parties, but I will attempt to include the most important material.

Union's Position.

The Union suggests that its proposal for a straight percent per cell raise is consistent both with previous voluntary settlements in Prairie Farm and with the great majority of settlements which have occurred in other school districts for 1985-86. By increasing each step of the salary schedule by the same percentage, all steps in the schedule retain their proportionate relationships with all other steps in the schedule. The status quo is thus preserved. The Employer offer, on the other hand, with its flat dollar amount applied to each step, contains a major restructuring of the salary schedule.

NUE argues that an analysis of the percentage increase by benchmark positions reveals that the District's offer would raise the base salary of the starting teachers by a much higher percentage than the base rates for more experienced staff. Under the District offer the lowest percentage increase would be to those with the most experience and most academic training at the tops of the MA and MA+8 lanes. Also, in considering the size of the experience increment, the District offer would have an impact on all steps of the schedule except Step 0 by reducing the increment from 4% to 3.7%.

The Union believes and argues that it is an established standard of arbitration that the party proposing the change in the status quo has the burden of proof to show why the change should occur. Because the District is seeking to make such a significant change, and in view of the steady bargaining history in Prairie Farm since 1981-82 (all settlements based upon percent per cell) and the overwhelming settlement pattern in the area for 1985-86 (41 of 49 area settlements have percent per cell agreements), the burden of proof for the Employer is considerable. When the Employer contends that it is not proposing a change in the structure, but that the Union's percent per cell is the change, the District not only evades its responsibility of meeting the burden of proof, but attempts to pass that burden inappropriately to the Union. Since there is no real evidence of difficulty in recruiting new teachers in Prairie Farm (as the testimony at the hearing showed), there simply does not appear to be a reasonable justification for the attempt to change the structure in the manner proposed by the District.

Concerning the comparisons with other school districts, the Union believes its offer to be more reasonable when compared to 49 settlements in northern Wisconsin including 9 settled schools out of 14 in the Lakeland Athletic Conference. Using the 5 benchmarks suggested by the

District for an analysis of the two offers to the comparables, the results are clear: NUE's even-handed wage rate proposal more nearly matches the patterns visible in the Conference. While the Board's offer is within a reasonable proximity of the average at the BA and MA bases, it is 2 percent or more below the averages in the other three benchmarks. When placement of the staff on the schedule is considered, it would be a clear and immediate insult to the overwhelming majority of current employees to have imposed on them wage rate as disproportionate as that which exists in the District's final offer. But further, when a benchmark analysis is conducted comparing average dollar increases, NUE's offer is closer to the average dollar benchmark increase in four of the five benchmarks. At the one benchmark (MA Base) where the District offer is closer to the averages, there are no teachers.

As to a comparison of the costs (salary and total compensation) of each of the offers to the comparables, the Union submits that the Employer's figures (mainly in E-34) are irrevocably flawed. The rebuttal of actual settlement figures in the Employer's exhibits calls into question all the costing data presented by the District. But even the Employer's computing of its previous year's costs (specifically its health insurance expenses) are inaccurate, further eroding the credibility of the costing data. Even though use of the costing data is very questionable, after making several important corrections, the Union's offer is seen to be more reasonable.

A review of the other statutory criteria shows that there is no question as to the lawful authority of the Employer and that the stipulations of the parties reveal that the parties can work out agreements in complex areas such as co-curricular salaries which shows a successful collective bargaining relationship. As to the interests and welfare of the public, NUE believes this is a relevant factor since granting the District offer would have the effect of depressing the wages for the most experienced teachers, which could well mean that they would look elsewhere for employment and leave the District. This would impact on the interests and welfare of the public because experienced, established teachers provide vital stability necessary to maintain quality education in the schools. Even though the Employer argues that the current farm economy justifies their extremely low offer, the Board fails to show that Prairie Farm differs in any way from other comparable districts dealing with the same economy. And finally, concerning the cost of living, most arbitrators have found that the best basis for judging the cost of living factor is the pattern of settlements in the comparables.

For these reasons, the Union believes that the Arbitrator should select its offer in this case.

District's Position.

The District argues that the Arbitrator shall give "full weight" to all the criteria in determining the reasonableness of the parties' offer, not just one criterion (comparison of wages received by teachers in comparable districts) as used by the Union. The Board asserts that all the statutory criteria strongly support the Board's position.

A comparison between the parties' offers and the inflation rate confirms that the District's wage and total package offer of 8.8% significantly exceeds the CPI-U by 4.8%, and it exceeds the CPI-W by 4.6%. Consequently, Prairie Farm teachers have not only kept pace with inflation, they have also made real income gains. While some arbitrators have accepted the argument that area settlements is the best indicator of the local cost of living, the Board submits that the clearer indicator of the cost of living in a specific area is the private and public sector settlements in the same community. In Prairie Farm the cost of living is indeed low if the municipal and remaining Prairie Farm School employee settlements are considered as indicators of the cost of living. For example, Barron County employee settlements are as low as 3.1% for 1986.

The Board submits that the school districts comprising the Lakeland Athletic Conference are comparable to Prairie Farm. Extensive arbitral support leads to the use of the athletic conference as the best for comparisons. Statistical evidence in terms of average pupil membership

and fulltime equivalent staff shows that the Lakeland Athletic Conference is most suited as comparables. In contrast, the Union has failed to demonstrate that the districts it includes in its comparable pool are, in fact, comparable.

The Board argues that it is no longer sufficient to rely solely on benchmark data because significant variety exists in the salary schedule structures in school districts. Districts increasingly have come to rely on restructuring their salary schedules to address concerns specific to individual districts, concerns typically based on a district's hiring needs, general program staffing and the experience and educational levels of the district's own staff. As a result, salary schedule benchmarks are nothing more than phantom indicators. Many arbitrators recognize this and are beginning to question the ability of benchmarks to provide an adequate basis to reach determinations of reasonableness. In this case four of the nine settled Conference schools made changes to the traditional method of teacher payment which does not show up in their salary schedule. A further difficulty of the benchmark comparison at Prairie Farm is that 93% of the District's staff are not located at any of the five benchmarks. The District submits that the settlement levels in the comparable districts must be considered.

In looking at these settlement levels, it shows that the average teacher wages only increase in the settled comparable districts equals \$1,517 per teacher or 7.24%. The Board's final offer of \$1,463 per teacher or 7.43% is within \$54 of the average wages only increase in the comparable districts, and it exceeds the percentage increase by almost .2%. The average total compensation increase in the settled comparable districts equals 2,020 per teacher or 7.61%. Again, the District's total package increase of \$2,172 or 8.4% exceeds the comparable average to a significant degree. A closer look reveals that not one of the comparable, settled districts provides a wage increase that matches or exceeds the Union's offer. Additionally, not a single district provided a total package increase that resulted in 9% or more. The Union's average teacher increase of \$1,666 exceeds the area average by \$149, and its total package increase of \$2,416 exceeds that area average by \$396. And an analysis of cumulative increases in the salary schedule benchmarks shows the Board's offer nearer to the area average at most of the benchmark positions and are generally competitive with the cumulative increases provided by the comparable districts.

The District argues that its offer more nearly matches the increases received by other municipal and private sector employees. The Board offer on wages exceeds the average non-teaching staff increase by 2.43% while the Union offer reveals an even greater disparity of 3.46%. The Board's total package increase of 8.4% exceeds the average 6% total package increase between the District and its remaining staff by 2.4%--the Union's total package increase of 9.34% exceeds these settlements by 3.34%. The same holds true when comparing the average weekly earnings.

The Board suggests that the continued reliance on percentage increases over the past years has resulted in distortions in the salary schedule. Each year since 1981-82 the relationship between the minimums and the maximums in each lane has changed as a result of applying a percent increase to the cells. The dollar increase as proposed by the District is meant to halt the distortion that has occurred over this period of time. Not only will applying a dollar increase serve to modify the distortion, but will also increase the level of the starting salary which is critical in Prairie Farm because of the need to recruit qualified teachers. In the private sector dollar and percentage increases are often alternated on a yearly basis in order to prevent this schedule distortion.

The Board's offer remains more responsive to the interests and welfare of the public than does the Union's offer. With the counties in the District (Barron and Dunn) being primarily agricultural, the farm crisis has had a dramatic effect on the Prairie Farm taxpayer's income and employment level. The average per capita income in the counties equals \$5,654, below the \$5,929 average in the counties in which the comparable districts appear. In addition there have been significant drops in farm commodity prices which has been coupled with increases in farm bankruptcies and farm foreclosures. The farm crisis has impacted upon the ability to finance the District's operating costs through state aid reductions and

tax rates not in line with current property values. However, despite these hardships facing the District's taxpayers, the Board has maintained stable employment and even continued to provide annual wage increases for its teaching staff by maintaining educational programs in the District.

For all the foregoing reasons, the Board's offer must be accepted as the more reasonable before the Arbitrator.

DISCUSSION

There is primarily one issue to be decided by the Arbitrator--the salary schedule for 1985-86. All other issues were agreed to at or before the arbitration session. The Union final offer proposals other than the salary schedule were accepted by the Employer at the arbitration hearing. While only the salary schedule remains to be settled, there are actually two issues involved--the amount of the increase and whether the salary schedule should be calculated using a percentage or a flat dollar amount.

Percent Versus Flat Dollar Increase.

The District argues that continued use of percentage increases has resulted in distortions in the salary schedule as it affects the relationship of the minimums and maximums in each lane. The distortion increases the longer such an approach (percentage increases) is used. The dollar increase proposed by the District would moderate the distortion and would increase the level of starting salaries which is important in recruiting qualified teachers. It is also true, as the Employer points out, that private sector settlements often alternate flat dollar increases and percentage increases in order to correct distortion and to retain a balanced salary structure.

As the Union points out in its brief, it is an established standard of arbitration that the party proposing a major change in the status quo bears the burden of proof to show why such a change should occur. The Prairie Farm bargaining history shows that all the settlements since 1981-82 have been based on percent per cell increases. The overwhelming majority of area settlements have percent per cell rather than dollar increases.

The Arbitrator does not find that the District has met the required burden of proof for a major change in the structure of the salary schedule to be imposed by an arbitration decision. While the District argued that two of the earlier contracts in the 1980's were percent settlements imposed by arbitrators, it did not present evidence to show that it had been bargaining for the dollar approach rather than a percentage approach during those negotiations. Neither has the Board presented evidence that in the last two voluntary settlements it sought to replace the percentage approach with the flat dollar increase. The Board's position would be stronger if it had presented evidence showing that it had tried to bring about such a change in the salary schedule in negotiations prior to 1985-86.

While I find merit in the Employer's position on this issue, I agree with the stand of other arbitrators that ordinarily such a major change should be accomplished by negotiations between the parties and should not be imposed by an arbitrator unless there are other compelling reasons for such an imposition. In this case, I do not find such a compelling reason. While the Employer's flat dollar increase does have merit in countering the distortion of schedule, I find that on the basis of the evidence presented, the Arbitrator should not impose the Employer's salary proposal through an arbitration decision.

Athletic Conference Comparables.

Both parties used the Lakeland Athletic Conference in arguing the merits of their cases. Nine of the 14 Conference schools have settled contracts for 1985-86. In order to better examine the reasonableness of

the two offers in this case, the Arbitrator prepared Chart 1 to show how Prairie Farm ranks in comparison to the other settled Conference schools. The chart shows historical rankings since 1980-81.

Chart 1
Prairie Farm Rank Among the Nine Settled Conference Schools
1980-81 through 1985-86

	BA	BA Max	MA	MA Max	Sched. Max
1980-81	5	9	5	4	4
1981-82	6	8	5	5	4
1982-83	6	4	4	5	4
1983-84	5	6	4	5	4
1984-85	5	6	4	5	4
1985-86					
Union	7	6	6	6	5
Board	5	9	5	7	6

Source: Exhibits E-24 through E-32; U-42

As the chart indicates, neither the Union nor the Employer offer maintains Prairie Farm's rank among the 9 settled schools when comparing the offers with the most recent years (1983-84, 1984-85). The Union's proposal comes closer to maintaining Prairie Farm's rank (declining one rank in 3, two in 1, and maintaining rank in 1) than the District's (dropping one in 1, two in 2, three in 1, and maintaining rank in 1). While benchmark comparisons have some shortcomings as the Board notes in its brief, they have some validity in making inter-school comparisons.

Union Exhibit 14 (U-14) as modified on page 20 of the Union brief shows the percentage increases at each benchmark for the nine settled Conference schools:

Chart 2
Average Benchmark Increases in 9 Conference Settlements

	NUE Offer	Board Offer	9 Conf.	48 Area
BA Base	6.5%	7.6%	6.8%	6.9%
BA Max	6.5	5.3	7.1	6.8
MA Base	6.5	7.1	7.2	7.3
MA Max	6.5	4.7	7.4	7.3
Schedule Max	6.5	4.5	7.6	7.6

Source: Union Brief, p. 20

This chart shows that the Union final offer here is below the average on the 9 settled Conference schools at every one of the 5 benchmarks. The Board's offer exceeds the average only at the BA level and is below at all others--it is particularly low at the MA Maximum and Schedule Maximum levels. While the Board has pointed out that there are only 2 Prairie Farm teachers at the MA Maximum and Schedule maximum benchmarks, these salaries can still be an important incentive to career teachers. The secondary comparables cited by the Union in their exhibit also show the Union offer to be more in line with increases granted by other districts in northwestern Wisconsin.

It is clear on the basis of the above benchmark comparisons the Union offer is more reasonable than that of the Employer. The Employer's offer

does maintain the District's standing at the BA level, but it does this at the expense of other parts of the schedule. In attracting new teachers, both an attractive beginning salary and prospects for future salary advancement are important.

Cost of Living.

Both the District and the Union proposals exceed the increase in the CPI in the year preceding this contract year. The Union's offer is more in excess of the inflation rate than the District's offer. The Union points out that many arbitrators have held that actual current contract settlements are an appropriate measure of how the parties have considered the significance of the inflation factor. The Arbitrator also notes that one reason that salary increases for teachers have exceeded the inflation rate in recent years is the public recognition that teacher salaries need to be increased particularly in relation to other professional salaries in order to attract and hold high quality persons in the teaching profession.

Under either the Board or Union offer, the teachers would gain in real income and there would be an improvement in the attractiveness of the teaching profession in Prairie Farm. In view of the recent decline in inflation and the current economic situation, I find the Board's position on this issue to be a little more reasonable. In view of the pattern of 1985-86 settlements, however, I do not think the cost of living should be a major factor in the determination of this case.

Costing of the Proposals

The precise costing of each offer is a point of major disagreement between the parties in this case. Board Exhibit 34 (E-34) shows the wage and total compensation increases granted for 1985-86 by various conference schools. These show the Prairie Farm Employer proposal to provide a 7.43% salary increase and a compensation package increase of 8.02%. The Board states that the Union proposal provides for a wage increase of 8.46% and a compensation package increase of 9.34%. The Board's brief (p. 18) states that not one of the comparable, settled districts provides a wage increase that matches or exceeds the Union's offer--no district provided a total compensation increase of 9% or more.

The Union, at the arbitration hearing, questioned the accuracy and relevancy of such data which are gathered by school officials in each district. It specifically referred to data concerning the Bruce and Northwods settlements. The Union reply brief provides specific data concerning these two settlements. Using the Union's revised data, the average wage increase percent for seven settled schools (Birchwood and Flambeau information was incomplete and eliminated) is 8.51% and the total compensation increase is 8.63%. Both parties calculate the Union final offer (wages only) at 8.46% and the Board at 7.43%. Thus the Board's wage offer is about 1% below the group average and the Union's wage offer is very close to the average--8.46% compared to 8.51%.

The Union reply brief further states that the Board's 1984-85 health insurance costs were understated and that this results in an overstatement of the total compensation increase for 1985-86, compared to 1984-85. According to the Union's revised data, the figures should be as follows:

	<u>Dollars per teacher</u> <u>Wages - Percent</u>	<u>Dollars per teacher</u> <u>Total - Percent</u>
Conference Avg.	\$1713 - 8.51%	\$2309 - 8.63%
NUE Final Offer	1666 - 8.46	2296 - 8.80
Board Final Offer	1463 - 7.43	2052 - 7.90

The Union data show the Union final offer both for wages and the total compensation to be very close to the conference average.

The Arbitrator wishes that the parties had reached agreement on their cost figures prior to the arbitration hearing. In many arbitration cases the parties have done this so that there is no room for dispute.

Concerning the cost figures of other districts, the Union points out that such data are difficult to verify and subject to errors such as the Union noted in this case. But it would have been more appropriate if the Union had introduced its revised costing data in its original brief. Had the Union done so, the employer would have had more of an opportunity to respond to the criticisms of its cost data. Even if the Arbitrator were to disregard the Union reply brief, serious questions would still remain as to the validity of the inter-district cost comparisons which the Union challenged at the hearing.

Because of all of the above, not much weight can be given to the Employer's Exhibit 54 and the costing data therein, so more weight will be placed upon the benchmark comparisons. Taking into account the costing data presented by the Employer along with the corrections suggested by the Union, the Union's offer is appears to be slightly more reasonable.

Other Public Sector Increases.

The District points out that its settlement with the non-instructional and administrative staff provided for a 5% increase, compared to its wage offer to the teachers of 7.43%. However, it is not customary in teacher wage cases to give much weight to non-negotiated settlements since they are administratively determined.

Board Exhibit 60 (E-60) shows that unionized employees in Barron County received 1986 wage increases in the 4 to 5 percent range. The Board offer to its teachers exceeds that figure and the NUE offer is even more in excess. While the data favor the Employer offer, most arbitrators including the undersigned, have not given much weight to such comparisons. This is because it is difficult to compare teachers with these other groups of employees. Teachers are professionals who compete in a broader labor market. Also, in recent years there has been a state and national effort to raise teacher salaries to a more professional level and teacher salary increases have exceeded those given to other municipal employees.

Private Sector Wage Increases.

Here also, as the District points out, 1985 and 1986 private sector wage increases have been below increases being proposed for Prairie Farm teachers. Again, arbitrators have felt that it is more appropriate to give the most weight to comparisons with teachers in the same and other communities rather than private sector settlements. While the Employer offer is more reasonable compared to the Union final offer in light of increases in the private sector, little weight is placed upon this criteria.

Ability to Pay and Interest and Welfare of the Public.

The Employer argues (Brief p. 29) that the rural nature of Barron and Dunn counties makes the impact of the farm crisis more dramatic. The Employer suggests that the taxpayers in Barron and Dunn counties are having a more difficult time dealing with the economic problems facing the farmers and therefore this justifies a lower wage increase than the other districts in the Athletic Conference which are not as agricultural. The Arbitrator agrees, that if the taxpayers of the counties which support the Prairie Farm School District are indeed facing harder times than the other counties, there should be allowances made for these economic conditions. While the District cites many statistics showing the poor state of the economy in Barron and Dunn counties, there is little evidence which connects these problems with the collective bargaining of teachers in the counties--something this Arbitrator is interested in.

In order to determine if other school districts in Barron and Dunn counties have also responded to the farm crisis by reducing salary increases to the teaching staff in their districts, I have constructed the following chart (next page). Because the parties in this case did not provide historical costing (total package costs or salary only costs) information for these other districts, the Arbitrator had to compare

salary schedule increases. Using the 5 benchmark positions used by the parties (BA Base, BA Max, MA Base, MA Max, and Schedule Max), average salaries for the two years (1984-85 and 1985-86) were computed. These were subtracted to arrive at an average salary schedule increase for which a dollar amount and percentage were determined. While admittedly limited in light of recent changes districts are making in their salary schedules and placement of teachers on those schedules (suggested by the District above), I think this comparison has some value.

Chart 3
Comparison of Prairie Farm Average* Salary Schedule Increase
With the Average* Salary Schedule Increases Among
Barron and Dunn County School District Settlements
1985-86 over 1984-85

	<u>\$</u>	<u>%</u>
BARRON COUNTY		
Barron	1,405	6.67
Chetek	1,371	6.50
Clayton	856	4.58
Cumberland	1,405	6.67
County Average	<u>1,242</u>	<u>6.06</u>
DUNN		
Boyceville	1,565	7.52
Colfax	1,438	7.00
Elk Mound	1,335	7.08
Elmwood	1,405	6.50
Menomonie	1,480	7.00
County Average	<u>1,467</u>	<u>7.02</u>
Two-County Average	<u>1,367</u>	<u>6.59</u>
Prairie Farm		
Union	1,284	6.51
Board	1,101	5.58

*Average of 5 benchmark salaries used by parties
Source: Exhibits U-25 through U-52

This chart shows that wage increases in other Dunn and Barron county districts are very close to what the Union is proposing for Prairie Farm. On the other hand, the Employer's offer is below the average increases in both the counties individually and calculated together as a two-county average. The impact of the agricultural situation in Dunn and Barron counties has not resulted in salary settlements as low as what the Board here is proposing for Prairie Farm. On this basis, the Union offer is more reasonable.

CONCLUSION

The District's proposal for a different approach to the salary schedule--dollar instead of percent per cell increase--has some merit but the Arbitrator does not feel that the facts justify imposing it on the parties at this time. Such a change should be negotiated between the parties in future contracts. The Board has not shown that it has

attempted through prior negotiations to obtain this change and has not established an immediate need to impose such a change through arbitration.

The Athletic Conference benchmark comparables clearly show the Union offer to be more reasonable than that of the Board and this is a factor given the most weight by the Arbitrator.

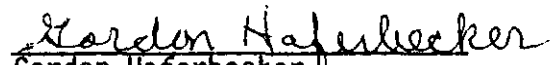
The Board position, when criteria such as cost of living and non-teacher public and private sector wage increases is considered, is stronger than that of the Union, but arbitrators in teacher cases regularly have given less weight to such criteria. In cases such as this, the major emphasis is on comparing teachers with teachers in the same community or comparable districts.

Taking into account the statutory criteria and the briefs and exhibits of the parties, and since the District has not met its burden of proof in regard to the change in computing salary increases, and the Union offer is not so out of line with the comparables as to justify the imposition of the Board's new salary approach on the parties, the Arbitrator finds the NUE offer more reasonable than that of the District.

AWARD

The final offer of the Northwest United Educators, along with agreed upon stipulations, shall be incorporated into the 1985-86 collective bargaining agreement between the parties.

Dated this 20th day of June, 1986 at Stevens Point, Wisconsin.


Gordon Haferbecker
Mediator/Arbitrator

FINAL OFFER OF NUE FOR THE 1985-86 PRAIRIE FARM CONTRACT

STEP	BA	BA+8	BA+16	BA+24	MA	MA+8
0.0	15355	15633	15911	16189	16466	16745
1.0	15970	16258	16548	16837	17124	17415
2.0	16583	16883	17184	17484	17783	18085
3.0	17198	17509	17821	18132	18442	18755
4.0	17812	18135	18456	18779	19101	19425
5.0	18427	18760	19093	19427	19759	20094
6.0	19040	19385	19730	20074	20418	20764
7.0	19655	20010	20366	20722	21076	21433
8.0	20269	20635	21003	21369	21736	22103
9.0	20883	21261	21639	22017	22394	22773
10.0	21497	21887	22276	22664	23052	23443
11.0	22112	22512	22912	23312	23711	24113
12.0	---	---	---	23959	24369	24783
13.0	---	---	---	---	25029	25452
14.0	---	---	---	---	---	26122

PRAIRIE FARM SCHOOL DISTRICT
1985-86 SALARY SCHEDULE

STEP	BA	BA+8	BA+16	BA+24	MA	MA+8
0	15518	15779	16040	16301	16562	16823
0.5	15806	16073	16339	16605	16871	17137
1	16095	16366	16638	16909	17180	17451
1.5	16383	16659	16936	17213	17489	17766
2	16671	16953	17235	17517	17799	18081
2.5	16960	17247	17534	17821	18108	18395
3	17248	17540	17833	18125	18417	18710
3.5	17537	17834	18132	18429	18727	19024
4	17825	18129	18430	18733	19036	19339
4.5	18113	18128	18729	19037	19345	19653
5	18402	18715	19028	19341	19654	19968
5.5	18690	19008	19327	19645	19964	20282
6	18978	19302	19625	19949	20273	20597
6.5	19266	19596	19924	20253	20582	20911
7	19555	19890	20223	20557	20891	21225
7.5	19843	20183	20522	20861	21201	21540
8	20131	20477	20821	21165	21510	21854
8.5	20420	20773	21120	21469	21819	22168
9	20708	21069	21418	21773	22128	22483
9.5	20996	21361	21717	22077	22438	22798
10	21285	21652	22016	22381	22747	23112
10.5	21573	21944	22315	22685	23056	23427
11	21861	22239	22614	22989	23365	23741
11.5				23293	23674	24056
12				23597	23984	24370
12.5					24293	24685
13					24602	24999
13.5						25313
14						25628