

A CURIOUS CITIZEN ASKED WHETHER THE YEARLY INCREASE IN THE SALARY OF TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS WAS MANDATED. SOMEONE TOLD THIS CITIZEN THAT THERE WAS NO WAY TO REDUCE OR CONTROL THE SALARY INCREASE . . .

THIS STATEMENT IS NOT TRUE.

At the Board of Education public hearing on its proposed budget, the Superintendent of Schools spent considerable time explaining that the budget process was not the place to deal with salary issues. Only the state legislature could address the problem of over-increasing salaries, he said, since the state had enacted the Educational Enhancement Act of 1986 and binding arbitration.

This is not the whole story. The Superintendent failed to inform us that administrators and teachers are not mandated to ask for increases in salary.

According to the Bureau of the Census, the average family income in the country is \$35,225. In wealthier Litchfield County the average family income is \$49,061. Yet individual school administrators in this town are paid over 42% more than the average family in Litchfield County makes in a year. According to the Congressional Budget Office these administrators are in the top 10% of wage earners in the country (90% of wage earners make less than \$60,000).

In Winsted the unemployment rate is nearly 10%. Many employees in the private

sector have not seen an increase in their pay in two or three years. Some private sector employees have seen benefits reduced or eliminated. Too many more have lost their jobs.

The Educational Enhancement Act of 1986 was meant to provide an adjustment in income to public school educators. It was not meant to create the great distance that it has between the educator's salaries and the taxpayers who pay those salaries.

It is inaccurate and cynical to claim that to attract qualified public employees the pay scale must equal that of the private sector. The public sector traditionally and historically offers workers more than the private sector in the way of job security and satisfaction, and other fringe benefits.

On Monday April 12, 1993, the Hartford Courant published a town-by-town review of the salaries of town and education officials in this region and in a related article reported that some salaries were frozen. For Winsted, the top 10 town salaries and the top 10 school salaries were listed by name and position. The salaries for these public officials are beyond most people's comprehension in these difficult times.

Listed here are the top ten salaries in Winsted. Included are the 1992-93 salary and the proposed 1993-94 salary. These salaries do not include the amount of compensation in benefits; none of the top ten are in the town side of government; and only one of these administrators lives in Winchester.

The numbers not only speak for themselves but reflect the imbalance between salaries and programs which benefit children. This is what disturbs taxpayers.

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