



U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

Press Release

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Verona Area School District Settles EEOC Equal Pay Lawsuit

School District to Pay \$450,000 to Wage Discrimination Victims and Raise Salaries of Teachers Paid Less Than Male Colleagues

MADISON, Wis. – Verona Area School District will pay \$450,000, raise salaries, and furnish other relief to settle a pay discrimination lawsuit filed by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the federal agency announced today.

According to EEOC’s lawsuit, the school district violated civil rights law by paying nine female special education teachers and one female school psychologist lower wages than more recently hired male employees doing the same work. All nine special education teachers have experience comparable to (or greater than) their male colleague, but the district paid them \$3,000 to \$17,000 less than it paid him.

The EEOC also charged that the school district paid a female school psychologist less than a male school psychologist, paying her at least \$16,000 less per year than it paid her male colleague. The district outright rejected the special education teachers’ and school psychologist’s requests to raise their salaries to match those of their recently hired, more highly paid male co-workers. However, the district repeatedly negotiated and agreed to salary increases sought by male teachers

whose salaries were lower than those of newly hired, less-experienced teachers.

Such alleged conduct violates the Equal Pay Act of 1963, which prohibits discrimination in pay based on sex. The EEOC filed its suit (Civil Action 3:22-cv-00039) in U.S. District Court for the Western District of Wisconsin after first attempting to reach a pre-litigation settlement through its conciliation process.

In addition to the \$450,000 in monetary relief, the four-year consent decree settling the suit requires Verona Area School District to raise the salaries of the women in the suit, review its pay policy, conduct anti-discrimination training, post a notice to employees at its worksites about the lawsuit, and submit written reports twice a year to the EEOC.

“More than 60 years after the Equal Pay Act, it is not only illegal but unacceptable to treat men and women differently when negotiating and setting pay,” said Diane Smason, the EEOC’s acting district director in Chicago, whose coverage includes the state of Wisconsin. “The EEOC will continue to vigorously investigate and enforce the law to make sure employees do not face such discrimination.”

“The Equal Pay Act requires employers to pay male and female workers equally for equal work,” said Gregory Gochanour, the EEOC’s regional attorney in Chicago. “That is the law, and the EEOC will hold employers accountable.”

For more information on equal pay and compensation discrimination, please visit [**https://www.eeoc.gov/equal-paycompensation-discrimination**](https://www.eeoc.gov/equal-paycompensation-discrimination) ([**https://www.eeoc.gov/equal-paycompensation-discrimination**](https://www.eeoc.gov/equal-paycompensation-discrimination)).

The EEOC’s Chicago District Office is responsible for processing charges of discrimination, administrative enforcement and the conduct of agency litigation in Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa and North and South Dakota, with Area Offices in Milwaukee and Minneapolis.

The EEOC advances opportunity in the workplace by enforcing federal laws prohibiting employment discrimination. More information is available on its website at [**www.eeoc.gov \(http://www.eeoc.gov\)**](http://www.eeoc.gov). Stay connected with the latest EEOC news by subscribing to our email updates.

