

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

STATE OF GEORGIA

CHERYL M. BOLTON, :
 :
 Appellant, :
 :
 vs. : **CASE NO. 2000-17**
 :
 SAVANNAH-CHATHAM COUNTY :
 BOARD OF EDUCATION, :
 : **DECISION**
 Appellee. :

This is an appeal by Cheryl M. Bolton (Appellant) from a decision by the Savannah-Chatham County Board of Education (Local Board) to deny her grievance that she was entitled to an additional year of experience credit. Appellant claims that the Local Board used the wrong regulations in making its decision. The Local Board's decision is sustained.

From January to June 1982, Appellant taught in a private school. The school had approximately the same curriculum as a public school. In January 1983, Appellant began teaching at a public elementary school, where she taught until June 1986.

Appellant was re-employed by the Local Board in 1988, but she was denied credit for the fractional years she taught in 1982 and 1983. In 1999, Appellant received information that led her to believe the Local Board should have given her credit for the period she taught in 1982 and 1983.

In 1982, when Appellant taught at the private school, experience in a private elementary or secondary school could be recognized if the schools were organized and conducted with approximately the same curriculum as the public schools. In addition, fractions of school terms could be recognized if the fractions represented six full months of continuous service. Memorandum, H. Titus Singletary, Jr., Georgia Department of Education, June 16, 1981. The regulations were changed on July 1, 1983, to require that private elementary and secondary schools had to be regionally accredited for the experience to be eligible. The requirement that fractions of years had to be consecutive service periods was continued. Professional Teaching Experience Recognized for Salary Purposes, Georgia Department of Education, September 9, 1982. The only relevant change in the regulations was to add the requirement that private institutions had to be accredited by a regional accrediting agency.

Appellant claims that the two half-year periods from January to June 1982 and from January to June 1983 should be added to give her an additional year of teaching experience credit for pay purposes. To obtain credit, the school where Appellant taught had to provide creditable experience and the fractional years had to be continuous and consecutive. Thus, teaching from

January to June of one school year and from August to January of the next school year provides one year of service for pay purposes. If, however, there is fraction or more break in service, then the teacher cannot obtain credit for the fractional year. While Appellant's teaching service at the private school was creditable under the regulations that existed, Appellant's teaching experience was not in consecutive teaching periods. The Local Board, therefore, properly denied her credit for the one year.

Based upon the foregoing, it is the opinion of the State Board of Education that the Local Board properly construed the regulations in denying Appellant credit for one year of teaching experience. Accordingly, the Local Board's decision is SUSTAINED.

This _____ day of June 2000.

Bruce Jackson
Vice Chairman for Appeals