

**DERY, Merlita M.**

Re: Step Increment; Secondment; Reassignment

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### **RESOLUTION NO. 021035**

Teresita D. Felipe, Executive Director, Educational Development Projects Implementing Task Force (EDPITAF), Department of Education (DepEd), Meralco Avenue, Pasig City, requests an opinion relative to the grant of step increment to Merlita M. Dery, Administrative Officer IV thereat effective August 3, 2001.

In her request, Felipe represents that:

*"Ms. Dery was appointed as Administrative Officer IV (SG 22) last August 3, 1995 with a monthly salary of P9,950.00. With the full implementation of the new Salary Standardization Law II effective November 1, 1997, her salary was adjusted to P16,667.00. A step increment (step 2) was granted to her last 1998, thus, her monthly salary was P17,984.00. Effective July 26, 1999 she was on secondment as Project Development Officer IV at the Secondary Education Development and Improvement Project (SEDIP) with a monthly salary of P18,334.00 (SG-22, step 1). While at SEDIP she also earned leave credits which she commuted per CSC MC 41, s. 1998. Further, she used to receive a 20% premium over and above her rate as PDO IV per DBM letter dated June 1, 2000. Ms. Dery's secondment at SEDIP was pre-terminated and she returned to EDPITAF effective June 27, 2001 as AO IV receiving P18,792.00 (SG 22, step 2).*

*"May we know if EDPITAF can grant Ms. Dery a third step increment effective August 3, 2001 since she was with SEDIP for almost two years (from July 26, 1999 to June 27, 2001)."*

The issue to be resolved in the instant case is whether the services of Dery, while on secondment to the Secondary Education Development and Improvement Project (SEDIP), can be considered in the computation of the three-year period of continuous service in a position for the grant of step increment.

The Commission rules in the negative.

In point are **Section 1(b), Rule II and Section 2, Rule III of Joint CSC-DBM Circular No. 1, s. 1990**, which provide, as follows:

*"Rule II. Selection Criteria*

*`Section 1. Step increments shall be granted to all deserving officials and employees xxx*

*X X X*

*`(b) Length of Service - For those who have rendered continuous satisfactory service in a particular position for at least three (3) years.'*

*"Rule III. Step Increments*

*X X X*

*`Section 2. Length of Service - A one (1) step increment shall be granted officials and employees for every three (3) years of continuous satisfactory service in the position. Years of service in the position shall include the following:*

*`(a) Those rendered before the position was reclassified to a position title with a lower or the same salary grade allocation; and*

*`(b) Those rendered before the incumbent was transferred to another position within the same agency or to another agency without a change in position title and salary grade allocation.'"*

A thorough scrutiny of the aforequoted provisions reveals that the grant of step increment on the basis of length of service requires that an employee must have rendered at least three (3) years of continuous and satisfactory service in the position to which he/she is an incumbent. As qualified by the said Circular, years of service include those rendered prior to the incumbent's transfer to another position without a change in position title and salary grade allocation.

Records show that Dery's secondment to SEDIP was effective July 26, 1999 to June 27, 2001. Meanwhile, in **CSC Resolution No. 01-1779 (Villones, Mary Grace D.)** dated November 12, 2001, the Commission categorically declared that:

*"... More importantly, the supposed secondment of Villones does not conform with the definition of secondment which is the movement of an employee from one department or agency to another since her movement is still within the same agency. Pursuant to **Section 6 (A), Rule III of the Revised Omnibus Rules on Appointments and Other Personnel Actions**, the personnel movement which aptly applies to the herein request should be **REASSIGNMENT** which is defined as the movement of an employee from one organizational unit to another in the same department or agency which does not involve a reduction in rank, status or salary."*

Since the abovequoted resolution is effective prospectively, meaning from November 12, 2001 onwards, the secondment of Dery in this case can still be considered secondment although it should have been properly treated as a reassignment. In which case, the applicable provision is **Section 6(c)(viii), Rule III of CSC Memorandum Circular No. 15, s. 1999** which provides that a seconded employee shall be on leave without pay from his/her mother agency for the duration of his/her secondment. That being so, Dery, during her secondment, incurred a gap in the service in her mother agency which gap simply means that she did not render continuous service for purposes of the grant of step increment. At this point, the Commission emphasizes that in cases of secondment, the period during which an employee is seconded shall not be counted for purposes of the grant of step increment but in cases of reassignment, the period during which an employee is reassigned is to be considered in the computation of the length of service relative to the grant of step increment, it being obvious that a reassigned employee is not on leave without pay in his/her mother unit and thus does not incur a gap in the service.

**WHEREFORE**, the Commission hereby rules that the services rendered by Merlita M. Dery while she was on secondment to SEDIP are not to be considered in the computation of her length of service in the Department of Education for purposes of the grant of step increment.

Quezon City, AUG 07 2002

(Signed)  
**JOSE F. ERESTAIN, JR.**  
Commissioner

(Signed)  
**KARINA CONSTANTINO-DAVID**  
Chairman

(Signed)  
**J. WALDEMAR V. VALMORES**  
Commissioner

Attested by:

(Signed)  
**ARIEL G. RONQUILLO**  
Director III

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