

Catholic school principal pleads innocent

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (AP) — A Roman Catholic brother who is principal of an all-boys high school pleaded innocent to charges he tried to buy sex from a 17-year-old boy.

Brother John M. Walderman was allowed to remain free on personal recognizance after his Superior Court arraignment on Wednesday. Walderman, 40, entered the plea wearing a clerical collar and black suit.

The principal of Bishop Hendricken High School was arrested by East Providence police on New Year's Day. He was charged with one felony count of transporting for pros-

titution and a misdemeanor count of solicitation.

Police said they found Walderman and the boy, who is not a Hendricken student, in a car parked in an isolated area.

Walderman was granted a leave of absence from the school after his arrest.

He is the fourth Rhode Island religious official to be charged in the last year with morals offenses involving young boys.

The Rev. Paul Henry Leech was sentenced in October to three years in prison for sexually assaulting four boys. Two other priests are awaiting

trial.

Walderman was allowed to leave Rhode Island until his trial. His attorney said he would be teaching elsewhere, but declined to elaborate.

In a signed statement to police filed with the court, Walderman said he picked up the boy and had discussions about sexual acts for money, but that it was the boy who suggested the idea.

"He state that he would be willing to fool around if he could get paid for it," the statement said. "I did give it some thought if I would participate in it."