

**West Contra Costa Unified School District
Minutes of the Board of Education Meeting
Lovonya DeJean Middle School
3400 McDonald Avenue
Richmond, CA 94805**

January 7, 2009

A. CLOSED SESSION

B. OPENING PROCEDURES

President Audrey Miles called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM. The Board recessed into Closed Session. President Miles called the Public Session to order at 6:40 PM.

B.1 Pledge of Allegiance

President Miles led those in attendance in the pledge of allegiance.

B.2 Welcome and Meeting Procedures

President Miles offered welcome and instructions to the public regarding the meeting.

B.3 Roll Call

Board Members Present: Madeline Kronenberg, Antonio Medrano, Audrey Miles, Charles Ramsey, Tony Thurmond

Staff Present: Alejandro Alonso, Interpreter; Joe Abrego, Executive Director Technology; Andre Bell, Sr. Director Technology; Steve Collins, SELPA Director; Martin Coyne, Director Accounting/Audits; Sheri Gamba, Associate Superintendent for Business Services; Wendell Greer, Associate Superintendent K-Adult; Bruce Harter, Superintendent; Debbie Haynie, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent; Ken McDaniel, Interim Electronics Supervisor; Elmer Meredith, Electronics Technician; Nia Rashidchi, Assistant Superintendent Educational Services; Jessica Romeo, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources; Bill Savidge, District Engineering Officer

B.4 Presentation of Student Board Representative Matthew Chao, De Anza High School

Mr. Chao spoke about activities at DeAnza High School and the support of Principal Gardner.

B.5 Report/Ratification of Closed Session

Superintendent Harter asked that the Board ratify the vote taken in Closed Session to expel seven (7) students from the West Contra Costa Unified School District, suspending each of the seven (7) expulsions.

MOTION: Mr. Ramsey moved to ratify the vote taken in Closed Session to expel seven (7) students and suspend all seven (7) expulsions. Ms Kronenberg seconded. Ms. Kronenberg, Mr. Medrano, Mr. Ramsey, and President Miles voted yes, with Mr. Thurmond abstaining and no absences. Motion carried 4-0-1-0.

B.6 Agenda Review and Adoption

MOTION: Mr. Ramsey moved to adopt the agenda. Ms. Kronenberg seconded. Ms. Kronenberg, Mr. Medrano, Mr. Ramsey, Mr. Thurmond, Student Representative Chao (advisory vote only) and President Miles voted yes, with no abstentions and no absences. Motion carried 5-0-0-0.

Public Comment:

Robert Brower spoke about a recent Facilities Subcommittee Meeting where an agenda item was discussed for submission and placement on the next Board of Education agenda.

B.7 Minutes: December 10, 2008

MOTION: Mr. Ramsey moved approval of the minutes of December 10, 2008. Mr. Medrano seconded. Ms. Kronenberg, Mr. Medrano, Mr. Ramsey, Mr. Thurmond, Student Representative Chao (advisory vote only) and President Miles voted yes, with no abstentions and no absences. Motion carried 5-0-0-0.

C. AWARDS, RECOGNITIONS, AND REPORTS

C.1 Recognition and Appreciation of Paul Ehara, Director of Communications

Superintendent Harter recognized Mr. Ehara and invited him come forward to receive a token of appreciation. Mr. Ehara reflected on his twenty years of service saying they have been incredibly rich and that he feels fortunate to have had the opportunity to serve the schools and community in which he lives.

Public Comment:

Pixie Hayward Schickele, Robert Studdiford and Cathy Garza thanked Paul for his service to the district.

Board Comment:

Mr. Ramsey recalled that Mr. Ehara was with the district when he began working with it in 1993 saying he is thankful for opportunity to work together on behalf of the district. Mr. Ramsey also acknowledged Devi Jameson, Toni Oklan-Arko, individuals who also recently retired.

Mr. Medrano thanked Mr. Ehara for all the assistance he offered.

Ms. Kronenberg spoke about Mr. Ehara being the carrier of the message of the district, wishing him success and happiness in the future.

Mr. Thurmond thanked Mr. Ehara for his 20 years of service, hoping that his retirement is full.

President Miles spoke about Mr. Ehara's calm spirit in keeping people informed and wished him all the best.

C.2 Local One Scholarship Award

Ms. Romeo introduced Sylvia McClafin, on behalf of Local One, to present the Major Dixon Scholarship Award to Elizabeth Gonzales, an El Cerrito graduate. Ms. Gonzales currently attends Brown University.

Ms. Gonzales said she is appreciative of the scholarship and spoke about teachers who inspired her to succeed.

Board Comment:

Mr. Ramsey said that he is excited for Ms. Gonzales and appreciates the support from Local One with this scholarship. Mr. Ramsey invited Ms. Gonzales to come back to speak to other Spanish speaking families about her experiences.

Ms. Kronenberg said she is appreciative of what Ms. Gonzales said about inspirational teachers and asked that she come back to share her college experience with other students.

Mr. Medrano thanked Local One for the scholarship and said he is proud of Ms. Gonzales for her acceptance and work at Brown University.

Ms. Miles said that Ms. Gonzales is an example for other students in the district and wished her continued success.

Mr. Chao congratulated Ms. Gonzales for the scholarship award and said he was surprised and happy to hear she is attending an Ivy League college.

Mr. Thurmond offered congratulations to Ms. Gonzales and her family, suggesting that she and Local One be recognized on the district website.

C.3 Announcement of The Ed. Fund 2008-2009 Grants

Superintendent Harter introduced Jennifer Henry, Executive Director of the West Contra Costa Education Fund, to introduce the 45 grant recipients. The winners present introduced themselves and described their projects.

Board Comment:

Mr. Medrano said he served on the committee that read the many great applications submitted. He urged students to apply for upcoming scholarship grants, thanking The Ed. Fund for their 25 years of service to the community.

Mr. Ramsey thanked The Ed. Fund and the teachers for their hard work. He asked teachers to let the Board know how their projects succeed.

Ms. Kronenberg thanked the Ed Fund and remarked that these are the kinds of teachers who will impact students. Mr. Thurmond thanked Ms. Henry and The Ed. Fund as well as the teachers for their creative projects that make teaching come alive. He also urged high school students to apply for scholarship awards.

Ms. Miles encouraged the audience to contribute to The Ed. Fund as it provides services that the district cannot.

C.4 NCLB District Corrective Action

Ms. Rashidchi offered a presentation about the status of corrective action as a Year 3 Program Improvement District, what the designation means for the district and action steps to be taken.

Board Comment:

Ms. Kronenberg asked questions about the timeline and submission to the State Board of Education and the implementation process. Ms. Rashidchi responded.

Mr. Medrano asked about the details for parent meetings and encouraged parent attendance.

Mr. Thurmond asked questions about ongoing efforts to meet targets for the current year. Ms. Rashidchi offered explanation about schools and their specific actions.

President Miles said she looked forward to working through this process with the Academic Subcommittee.

Public Comment:

Mine Ternar urged the district to protect programs that work well for students.

C.5 Report on Student Demographics

Superintendent Harter asked Ms. Gamba to report on the final Davis Demographics Study. She reported that this data is used to predict student attendance trends over a ten-year period of time and said this information will be brought back to the Board periodically as it is updated in order to examine student population trends.

Public Comment:

Robert Brower spoke about the usefulness of the data and suggested adding data with Portola Middle School grade levels.

Board Comment:

None

C.6 Report on Seismic and Geotechnical Studies for District Sites

Mr. Savidge presented an overview on the status of various sites in the school district regarding seismicity and geotechnical issues.

Board Comment:

Mr. Ramsey thanked staff for the in-depth work to inform the Board in order to make decisions to keep students safe. He offered a technical correction regarding information regarding the Blakemont slide zone. He continued by asking further questions for clarification. Mr. Savidge responded.

Mr. Medrano asked that this item be agendaized for the next Facilities Subcommittee meeting. He asked for clarification regarding corrective action. Mr. Savidge responded.

Public Comment:

Karen Franklin thanked everyone for the new El Cerrito campus and also expressed concern over the fewer resources for student instruction when greater demands are being made.

Robert Brower expressed concern about the needs and safety of special education students at Cameron school.

Christina Slamon thanked Mr. Savidge for the clarity of the report and said that she supports the relocation process of Portola Middle School for a new school site.

Board Comment:

Ms. Kronenberg asked Mr. Savidge to respond to the comments regarding Cameron. Mr. Savidge recommended immediate review of the Cameron site by maintenance staff. Ms. Kronenberg continued to inquire about the safety of Portola, Adams, Pinole Valley and corrective action for sites. Mr. Savidge responded.

Mr. Thurmond said that he would like to see that any school that needs additional earthquake proofing be regularly monitored and maintained. He asked that the Seismic and Geotechnical Study be agendized at a Board meeting for discussion and action with recommendations to allow the Board to look at alternatives for the safety of the students.

Mr. Ramsey also asked that an action plan for a Portola timeline be brought back to the Board. Discussion continued regarding the Riverside site and extent of the area of the site that might not be a viable location. Mr. Savidge responded for clarification.

Motion: Mr. Ramsey moved approval to bring this study back to the Board for action at the January 21, 2009 meeting. Mr. Thurmond seconded. Ms. Kronenberg, Mr. Medrano, Mr. Ramsey, Mr. Thurmond, Student Representative Chao (advisory vote only) and President Miles voted yes, with no abstentions and no absences. Motion carried 5-0-0-0.

Mr. Medrano said that the seismic and geotechnical issues should be considered along with the upcoming school closure meetings as an overview of the district.

Mr. Thurmond asked that staff have significant clarification and direction to bring back recommendations and timelines that address situations that could have divergent outcomes.

Dr. Harter responded that a timeline could be brought back with needs for next steps of the study.

C.7 In Memory of Members of the School Community

Superintendent Harter acknowledged the contributions of members of our school community who have passed away and shared in a moment of silence.

D. PUBLIC AND COMMITTEE COMMUNICATIONS
(Education Code 35145.5; Government Code 54950 et seq.)

D.1 Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Harter provided a report of events in district schools.

D.2 WCCUSD Public Comment

Al Kirkman spoke in opposition of closing schools.

Karen Franklin spoke about a recent Richmond City Council Meeting.

Robert Brower read a prepared statement regarding a request that the Facilities Subcommittee consider the impact of filing a facilities hardship application for funds for the Portola Middle School Relocation project.

Gigi Guizado de Nathan spoke in opposition of school closures.

Joanna Pace invited people to attend an upcoming Portola PTSA meeting.

Tova Halpern spoke about standing together to value public education and neighborhood schools.

Saidah Said, Gladys Dodds, Charles Rachlis, and Margaret Browne spoke about school closures.

Theo Oliphant spoke on behalf of clients who support the Board's decision to certify the environmental impact report and the relocation/rebuilding of the Portola relocation project.

Jeff Norman, David Miller, Bill Breeding, David Rossi, Denise Evans, Estella Sloan, Todd Wolfe, and Brian Nelson spoke on behalf of support for the Portola Relocation project.

Joanna Pace spoke about suggested changes to the scoring guide for school closure.

Board Comment:

Mr. Ramsey responded to public comment about consideration of the seismic issues and development of a plan for Portola.

Mr. Thurmond asked for clarification.

Superintendent Harter responded that this item could be brought back to the Board on January 21, 2009 as it is not agendized for tonight's meeting.

Ms. Kronenberg responded that she had concerns that the closure committee members would be considering options prior to the Board's opportunity to respond to the seismic report concerns.

E. ACTION ITEMS

E.1 Resolution 54-0809: Read Across America – March 2, 2009

Robert Ellis, chairperson for the Read Across American Committee for the United Teachers of Richmond, said they are excited about this year's March 2, 2009 celebration and the challenge to students to read. He concluded by thanking the Board for support.

Public Comment:

None

Board Comment:

Mr. Ramsey said literacy is most important and that he supports the resolution.

Mr. Medrano recalled learning to speak English when a teacher read to him as a child, and spoke in support of the program.

Ms. Kronenberg said that this program dovetails with many of the Adult Education literacy and parenting programs.

Mr. Thurmond recalled the fun he experienced as he participated last year and urged others to be involved this year.

Ms. Miles issued a challenge to city council, business community, and grandparents to participate in this year's Read Across America program.

MOTION: Mr. Ramsey moved approval of Resolution 54-0809. Mr. Medrano seconded. Ms. Kronenberg, Mr. Medrano, Mr. Ramsey, Mr. Thurmond, Student Representative Chao (advisory vote only) and President Miles voted yes, with no abstentions and no absences. Motion carried 5-0-0-0.

E.2 Establishment of a WCCUSD Youth Commission

Mr. Thurmond said he sees an opportunity to create a youth leadership advisory board as taking a step forward to involve youth to participate in governance of the Board.

Public Comment:

Robert Brower spoke about attending a Hispanic youth meeting last spring and bringing back information as great resources for use with youth involvement. He also expressed concern about a drug problem at DeAnza.

Todd Wolfe spoke in support of the organization of a youth commission.

Board Comment:

Mr. Ramsey said he would like to see a formalized approach to have more student engagement.

Ms. Miles encouraged Mr. Brower to get in touch with Mr. Thurmond to share information.

MOTION: Mr. Ramsey moved approval of the establishment of a WCCUSD Youth Commission. Mr. Medrano seconded. Ms. Kronenberg, Mr. Medrano, Mr. Ramsey, Mr. Thurmond, Student Representative Chao (advisory vote only) and President Miles voted yes, with no abstentions and no absences. Motion carried 5-0-0-0.

E.3 Revised District Transfer Policies, BP 5116.1 and 5117

Mr. Greer presented the rationale for the proposed policy changes in dealing with district enrollment. The intent is to allow a resident family to have first priority to attend the resident school.

Public Comment:

Jill Wolkenfeld said she found this item to be confusing and urged board to vote no.

Board / Staff Comment:

Mr. Greer provided clarification between intra-district and inter-district transfer permits.

Mr. Thurmond asked whether the policies had been reviewed by any parent groups and asked for examples of what residents who are displaced do to transfer.

Superintendent Harter explained that the change reaffirms the district commitment to neighborhood schools and to establish an annual reapplication process.

MOTION: Mr. Medrano moved approval of revised BP 5116.1 and 5117. Mr. Ramsey seconded. Ms. Kronenberg, Mr. Medrano, Mr. Ramsey, Student Representative Chao (advisory vote only) and President Miles voted yes, Mr. Thurmond voted no, with no abstentions and no absences. Motion carried 4-1-0-0.

E.4 Presentation of the 2007-08 Audit Report by Perry-Smith, LLP

Ms. Gamba introduced Mr. Steven Westcoat of Perry-Smith LLP who presented the audit report and financial statements for the 2007-2008 year. Mr. Westcoat provided an overview of the report.

Public Comment:

None

Board Comment:

Mr. Thurmond asked for clarification about recommendations made by Perry-Smith auditors. Mr. Westcoat highlighted the nature of the recommendations.

MOTION: Mr. Ramsey moved approval of the 2007-08 Audit Report. Ms. Kronenberg seconded. Ms. Kronenberg, Mr. Medrano, Mr. Ramsey, Mr. Thurmond, Student Representative Chao (advisory vote only) and President Miles voted yes, with no abstentions and no absences. Motion carried 5-0-0-0.

E.5 California School Board Association (CSBA) Appointment for Delegate Assembly with the term beginning when the appointee has been notified of his/her appointment by the District through March 2011

Mr. Ramsey said that he would like to continue to serve as delegate through the end of the calendar year and groom another board member to take the position.

MOTION: Mr. Ramsey moved approval by offering his name as the CSBA Appointment for Delegate Assembly. Ms. Kronenberg seconded. Ms. Kronenberg, Mr. Medrano, Mr. Ramsey, Mr. Thurmond, Student Representative Chao (advisory vote only) and President Miles voted yes, with no abstentions and no absences. Motion carried 5-0-0-0.

F. DISCUSSION ITEMS

F.1 Status Reports – Facilities Planning and Construction

Mr. Bill Savidge provided an updated report of the bond construction program in the district.

Public Comment:

None

Board Comment:

Mr. Ramsey asked questions about hydraulic system repairs and asked for a presentation on Dover Elementary School. Mr. Savidge responded.

G. BUSINESS ITEMS

G.1 Contracted Services

G.2 Grants/Awards/Agreements

G.3 Acceptance of Donations

G.4 Approval of Fund-Raising Activities

G.5 Summary of Payroll and Vendor Warrant Reports.

G.6 Acceptance of Contracts for Placement of Student Teachers

G.7 Revised Board of Education Annual Resolutions Numbers 06-0809, 09-0809 and 37-0809 for the 2008-09 School Year

G.8 Annual Organization: Secretary to the Board; authorization of Signatures; Board Calendar

G.9 Routine Personnel Changes - Classified

G.10 Notification of Claim Rejected

G.11 Ratification and Approval of Engineering Services Contracts

- G.12 Ratification and Approval of Negotiated Change Orders
- G.13 Ratification of "Piggyback" Contract with Mt. Diablo USD for Spectrum's Encore! Student Information Services (SIS) for Special Education
- G.14 Williams Lawsuit Complaints Quarterly Report
- G.15 Resolution No. 53 -0809: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – January 19, 2009
- G.16 Approval of Board member to Attend Training Modules and Conferences

Public Comment:

None

Board Comment:

Mr. Ramsey spoke about Resolution 53-0809: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day and what it means to the community and contributions of African Americans to the foundation of our country. He further commended Mr. Medrano for planning to attend training and conferences as a new member of the Board hoping that he will bring back information to share with other Board members.

MOTION: Mr. Ramsey moved approval of Consent Items G. 1 - 16. Ms. Kronenberg seconded. Ms. Kronenberg, Mr. Medrano, Mr. Ramsey, Mr. Thurmond, Student Representative Chao (advisory vote only) and President Miles voted yes, with no abstentions and no absences. Motion carried 5-0-0-0.

H. UNFINISHED REQUESTS TO ADDRESS THE BOARD

None

I. COMMENTS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION AND SUPERINTENDENT

Mr. Thurmond said as this is the first meeting of the year, he is looking forward to working with Board members and the community for the best quality education for students.

Ms. Kronenberg said the Board is struggling with the difficult decisions ahead. She said she does not want there to be confusion for the closure committee members so she would like to see a grading sheet for all possible scenarios.

Dr. Harter said that the committee will be asked to indicate their preference between scenarios and then ask for suggestions for modifying and improving the scenarios. The committee will also have opportunities to design their own scenario. All the information will be collected and brought back to the Board. This will provide an overall picture of each scenario, possible improvements, and then community designed scenarios. He said that he believes a synthesis solution will come out of the process by listening to the community as we go through the process.

Mr. Ramsey expressed concern about making hasty decisions to avoid confusion. He clarified that committee members can vote for the scenario that they feel appropriate.

Mr. Medrano offered information about the Contra Costa Community College career achievement academy classes.

Ms. Miles invited the community to participate in Martin Luther King, Jr. Day celebrations in Hercules, El Cerrito and other places in the community.

Mr. Ramsey thanked Ms. Miles for her leadership. He announced that a Dartmouth intern will be at the District in ten weeks, inviting all board members to meet her. He also said that Cornell Professor Isaac Krannick will visit the district on Friday, January 9, 2009. Mr. Ramsey continued by saying that interviews for the upcoming Ivy League program will begin this week for programs at Brown, Cornell and Princeton Universities.

J. THE NEXT SCHEDULED BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

Lovonya DeJean Middle School – January 21, 2009

K. ADJOURNMENT

President Miles adjourned the meeting at 11:12 PM.

Motion vote count order: Yes-No-Abstain-Absent

BH:dh

<p><i>AAM</i></p> <p>Approved 1-21-09</p>
