

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

January 20, 2010

A. CLOSED SESSION

B. OPENING PROCEDURES

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

B.1 Pledge of Allegiance

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

B.2 Welcome and Meeting Procedures

President Kronenberg welcomed the public to the meeting.

B.3 Roll Call

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

Staff Present: Alejandra Alonso, Interpreter; André Bell, Senior Director Bond Finance; Martin Coyne, Director Accounting/Audits; Steve Collins, SELPA Director; Susan Dunlap, Coordinator State and Federal Programs Lisa Erwin, Senior Director Fiscal Services; Bill Fay, Associate Superintendent for Operations; Luis Freese, Executive Director Maintenance and Operations; Sheri Gamba, Associate Superintendent for Business Services; Wendell Greer, Associate Superintendent K-Adult; Bruce Harter, Superintendent; Debbie Haynie, Executive Secretary; Linda Jackson, Executive Director; Harlan Kerr, Principal Vista High; Barbara Mallon, Director Curriculum and Instruction; Ken McDaniel, Electronics Supervisor; Raul Ramirez, Assistant Principal Adult Education; Nia Rashidchi, Assistant Superintendent Educational Services; Jessica Romeo, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources; Bill Savidge, District Engineering Officer; Marin Trujillo, Coordinator Community Engagement

B.4 Presentation of Student Board Representative Jason Oddoye, Vista High School

Mr. Oddoye spoke of activities and opportunities for students at Vista High School.

B.5 Report/Ratification of Closed Session

Superintendent Harter asked the Board to ratify the vote taken in Closed Session to expel two (2) students and suspend those expulsions for placement in the West Contra Costa Unified School District.

Motion: Mr. Ramsey moved to ratify the vote taken in Closed Session to expel two (2) students, suspending those expulsions for placement in the West Contra Costa Unified School District. Mr. Medrano seconded. Mr. Medrano, Ms. Miles, Mr. Ramsey, and President Kronenberg voted yes, with no absences and Mr. Thurmond abstaining. Motion carried 4-0-1-0.

B.6 Agenda Review and Adoption

Public Comment: None

MOTION: Mr. Ramsey moved to approve the Agenda with moving item G.1 Portola Middle School Temporary Relocation to follow the Consent Items. Mr. Thurmond seconded. Mr. Medrano, Ms. Miles, Mr. Ramsey, Mr. Thurmond, Student Representative Jason Oddoye (advisory vote only) and President Kronenberg voted yes, with no abstentions and no absences. Motion carried 5-0-0-0.

B.7 Minutes: January 6, 2010

MOTION: Mr. Ramsey moved to approve the Minutes for the January 6, 2010 meeting as revised. Mr. Medrano seconded. Mr. Medrano, Ms. Miles, Mr. Ramsey, Mr. Thurmond, Student Representative Jason Oddoye (advisory vote only) and President Kronenberg voted yes with no abstentions and no absences. Motion carried 5-0-0-0.

C. BUSINESS ITEMS

C.1 Grants/Awards/Agreements

C.2 Acceptance of Donations

- C.3 Approval of Fund-Raising Activities**
- C.4 Contracted Services**
- C.5 Summary of Payroll and Vendor Warrant Reports**
- C.6 Adoption of Resolution No. 64-0910: Replacement of Outdated Warrant**
- C.7 Acceptance of Contracts for Placement of Student Teachers**
- C.8 Routine Personnel Changes - Certificated**
- C.9 Approve Job Description: School Facilities Planning Specialist**
- C.10 Resolution No. 63-0910: Recognition of West Contra Costa Unified School District Job Shadow Days February 2 - 4, 2010 and Recognition of February 2010 as National Job Shadow Month**
- C.11 Resolution No. 62-0910: Signature Authorization for E-Rate**
- C.12 Williams Lawsuit Complaints Quarterly Report**
Ms. Rashidchi announced a revision to update this item.
- C.13 Adding Sixth Grade at Ford Elementary School**
- C.14 Agreement between the City of San Pablo and the West Contra Costa Unified School District for Joint Use of School District Recreational Facilities**

MOTION: Mr. Ramsey moved to approve the Consent Items C.1 – C.14. Ms. Miles seconded. Mr. Medrano, Ms. Miles, Mr. Ramsey, Mr. Thurmond, Student Representative Jason Oddoye (advisory vote only) and President Kronenberg voted yes, with no abstentions and no absences. Motion carried 5-0-0-0.

G.1 Portola Middle School Temporary Relocation

Superintendent Harter provided background about recent public meetings to seek relocation options from the community. He reported a summary of what was heard at those meetings which included many questions for clarification about Board decisions and direction, other options shared by parents, as well as input around parent choice options.

Public Comment:

Carol Renee, Joshua Ko, Stefan Moskowitz, Chris Mills, Keyon Mason, Christina Slamon, Florene VanHook, Joni Hiramoto, Mary Schmida, Estella Sloan, Joanna Pace, David Miller, Kim Walker, Ronna Minor, Robert Studdiford, Marci Yura, Nathan Clark, David Whitenack, Catherine Mercurio

Board Comment:

Mr. Thurmond thanked all the speakers for their impassioned testimony. He asked Superintendent Harter about staff's recommendation to build on the lower pad area of the Portola site. Dr. Harter provided information and said that staff responded to the request of Board to go out to the community to provide opportunity for public input where responses were similar to what was shared by the public at this meeting.

Ms. Miles referenced the timeline and lower pad option criterion of cost and potential legal challenge as discussed at a previous meeting. She asked staff to address costs and funding of programs/projects which might be deleted if lower pad costs are excessive, as well as the legal challenge regarding the Castro site. Mr. Fay responded that he will be able to provide a full reconciliation of costs after bids have been received for the DeAnza High School project. He was reluctant to announce how sites might be affected in the current economic bid environment. He plans to bring a recommendation to the Board for approval on an updated bond budget on February 10. Mr. Fay addressed the legal challenge around the Castro site and settlement possibilities, saying the District is hopeful for resolution by May of this year which would mean that the challenge of the CEQA process at Castro is not expected to impede the building or Portola on the Castro site.

Mr. Medrano applauded the students and parents who spoke for their convictions.

Mr. Ramsey said that as Portola parent he has a stake in the outcome. He said that at an earlier meeting he voted against the lower pad because he felt it is unnecessary and supports continued use of the existing building. He recalled information about the State deeming the Portola property unsafe to rebuild and the process to approve the Castro site. He said he is troubled by the argument as it appears to be a reversal of the Board recommendations made at a previous meeting. He continued to express concern about the sense of urgency that seems to be pressuring decisions including parent choice options, lower pad, and costs that will be incurred. He concluded by saying that he will support the lower pad even though he does not think it is the best solution.

Mr. Oddoye thanked the parents and students who came to speak, and said he agreed with keeping the student community intact and the difficulty for students to relocate. He addressed the educational and social benefits to keeping the school community intact.

President Kronenberg spoke about the emotion expressed at the meeting. She said she had looked at cost, time and safety considerations and overlooked the emotional value. She said that the passionate community of Portola has come together to argue in favor and she will support the lower pad option.

Mr. Thurmond asked further questions about statements made about mediation of the legal challenge. Mr. Fay responded that legal proceedings are matters for closed session discussion. He said that the legal situation is running parallel with building plans for the Castro site and currently is not causing delays. Mr. Fay further spoke about the slide zone as reported in engineering reports and relative safety for building a temporary campus on the lower pad. Mr. Ramsey discussed the geotechnical study. Mr. Fay responded that engineers can give a professional opinion regarding the slide zone. Mr. Ramsey asserted that there was not a one hundred percent certainty regarding slides and putting students and staff in harm's way.

Mr. Medrano said when reading seismic reports his concern was the safety of students. He expressed further concerns and said he would favor students on lower pads in response to the community input.

Mr. Thurmond said that the Board should consider every option to keep students from harm and that he believes that the Board should continue to consider both parent choice as well as lower pad in continuing to vet the conversation. He concluded that he supports reviewing all contingencies in decisions to remove children from potential harm as quickly as possible.

Mr. Ramsey spoke about the construction timeline, program decisions and other matters that play into the placement of students at the lower pad. He continued to discuss the reconstruction of Nystrom and Leadership Public Schools as well as potential support from the City of Richmond. He said he heard rejection of the parent choice option from the community and that he will vote to support the lower pad.

President Kronenberg asked Mr. Savidge to discuss timeline information. Mr. Savidge said a schedule was provided at a recent board meeting that indicated January 2011 as the target date for lower pad occupancy. He further discussed acceleration of the schedule by seeking a waiver of Department of State Architects Review since Portola is considered a most vulnerable site by the State. He discussed planning and construction aspects of the building industry in the current economy.

Mr. Medrano asked about removal of the portable buildings from El Cerrito High. Mr. Savidge responded that the removal package has been issued for bid and a contract award will be brought to the Board for approval on February 10.

Mr. Thurmond asked for clarification about whether parent choice options would impact construction at Nystrom. He said that each choice carries conditions about moving Portola students out of the current building either by August 2010 or January 2011. He said he would support the course that would be effective in August 2010. Mr. Savidge responded by saying the Nystrom project is a two phased renovation with construction of a new multipurpose building that can proceed with Leadership Public School (LPS) on the site. The second phase is a renovation of the existing building with the temporary housing campus in the buildings currently occupied by LPS, while construction is taking place. The anticipated future home for LPS is at the Kennedy Education Center. A parent choice option of a 7-12 grade configuration at Kennedy would potentially impact that plan. Mr. Thurmond asked further questions about accommodating a 7-12 campus and the needs of LPS. Mr. Savidge responded with further information and the feasibility of creating a separate modular building campus for LPS. Discussion continued around the complications.

Ms. Miles said she thinks the overall issue is that parents and Board Members want a decision. She said she supports academic rigor for Portola students if placed on the lower pad, and not endangering other projects. She said she supports this option and hopes that the Board can move on to other pressing issues.

Mr. Ramsey said he heard from the majority of Board members that the lower pad is the preferred option and will support the lower pad option, saying that the LPS situation complicates matters even more.

Superintendent Harter summarized the discussion that four Board members support the lower pad option exclusively and one Board member would like to proceed with parent choice options as well.

Ms. Kronenberg said that recommendations will be brought back for action at the February 10 meeting.

Mr. Ramsey asked whether the parent choice option will be considered, as he will proceed to gain information from constituents and staff.

Mr. Thurmond commented that the upcoming agenda setting will give direction for action to be considered by the Board.

Further discussion ensued.

Ms. Romeo clarified that the Board has given direction as Dr. Harter expressed, and that agenda setting will produce a staff recommendation upon which the Board can act or make an alternate recommendation.

Mr. Ramsey expressed concerned.

President Kronenberg stated that recommendation about the lower pad will be brought to the Board for a vote, and if that fails then other options will be considered.

A recess was taken at this time.

Mr. Oddo left the meeting at 8:35 PM.

AWARDS, RECOGNITIONS, AND REPORTS

D.1 Report on Parental Involvement Efforts in WCCUSD

Ms. Rashidchi invited Marin Trujillo, Barbara Mallon, Susan Dunlap and Raul Ramirez to present information about parental involvement in the District. A presentation was provided regarding parental involvement being a key for successful students and schools.

Public Comment:

Kristen Pursley

Board Comment:

Mr. Medrano asked for details of the Parent Leadership Retreat planned for January 22 and 23. Mr. Trujillo provided details.

Mr. Thurmond commended staff and parent groups for their work, and parent organizations throughout District. He said he would like to challenge the District to maximize parent involvement regarding safety, addressing the achievement gap and truancy issues in order to reduce negative challenges that have faced the District.

Ms. Rashidchi responded with information about opportunities for closing the achievement gap and the best areas of work on which to focus.

Ms. Miles said that the academic subcommittee has developed the process for promoting volunteerism and providing specific opportunities to help within the school and community. She said that the ultimate goal is to engage parents as partners. She mentioned several community partners who provided funding for fingerprinting to assist a large number of volunteers. She hopes that District partners will continue to support a strong sustainable program.

Ms. Rashidchi spoke about the review of obstacles that might prevent parent involvement and making the system more user-friendly to encourage further participation.

Mr. Medrano announced Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE) training at the Nevin Community Center in Richmond.

President Kronenberg said she saw two values - volunteering in schools and parenting training. She said it would be valuable to see what parenting skills affect the achievement gap. She suggested this be put on the Academic Subcommittee agenda to look at in more detail.

Ms. Miles spoke about working with incoming kindergarten parents and providing workshops through the County's First 5 program with parenting training.

Mr. Thurmond acknowledged the work of Mr. Ramsey while on the safety committee and his work to reinvigorate the parent organization at Stege Elementary. He asked President Kronenberg to bring a parent involvement resolution approved by the Safety Committee to Academic Subcommittee for review and support of the Board for the goal to set a benchmarks to utilize achievement, reduce truancy, and promote parent involvement.

President Kronenberg responded about bringing this back for further Board discussion and taking steps to connect to monitored results. The Academic Subcommittee will continue to have discussion around how parenting impacts achievement, safety and closing the achievement gap and will bring back a report to the Board.

D.2 Budget Report Updates

Ms. Gamba provided a report on Governor's recent budget information. She spoke of worst fears being realized with additional cuts to school funding for 2010-11. She said staff will bring as much information as possible over the next several weeks.

Public Comment: None

Board Comment:

Mr. Medrano commented that the news was painful.

President Kronenberg said these presentations are indeed painful, with no choices for action.

Ms. Gamba said she hoped to be able to bring more hopeful information in this time of making due with less.

D.3 Standing Reports

Citizens' Bond Oversight Committee – Robert Studdiford announced the upcoming January 27 meeting, 6:00 PM, and invited the public.

Community Budget Advisory Committee – Charles Cowens announced the January 21st meeting, where the committee will review audit results, first interim budget reports, and the role of parcel tax oversight.

Bayside Council PTAs – Cathy Garza announced the next general membership meeting for February 22nd, at Alvarado, 7:00 pm. She also announced that the Reflections art program awards ceremony will be held Saturday in Martinez. A collaborative with John Swett Unified School District is inviting parent participation regarding teen

safety. She concluded by announcing that PTAs will be represented in Sacramento on February 17 for an annual advocacy day to address legislatures.

Facilities Subcommittee – Mr. Medrano reported on the January 13th meeting which included recommendations to the Board for adjustments to Measure J program budgets and other items. The next meeting is scheduled for February 9, 2010.

Ivy League Connection – Mr. Ramsey spoke about the 30 students representing the District in upcoming summer programs. He announced information nights being planned for the spring.

Safety Committee – Mr. Thurmond announced the January 26 meeting at Kennedy High School, 6:00 PM and the public is invited.

Youth Commission – Mr. Thurmond announced the January 27, meeting scheduled for 7:00 PM at RYSE Center in Richmond.

Academic Subcommittee – Ms. Rashidchi announced the next meeting planned for Tuesday at Vista Hills.

D.4 In Memory of Members of the School Community

Dr. Harter recognized contributions of members of the community who have passed away.

E. PUBLIC AND COMMITTEE COMMUNICATIONS

(Education Code 35145.5; Government Code 54950 et seq.)

E.1 Superintendent's Report

Dr. Harter provided a report of events in District schools.

E.2 WCCUSD Public Comment

Christina Slamon, Robert Studdiford, Charles Cowens

F. ACTION ITEMS

F.1 Resolution No. 65-0910: African-American History Month - February 2010

Ms. Rashidchi introduced the resolution to support African-American History Month, recognizing the many contributions of African Americans and encouraging schools on a regular basis to develop relevant instructional activities and celebrations.

Public Comment: None

Board Comment:

Mr. Ramsey recalled that in the 1930's, Carter G. Woodson instituted the documenting of African American contributions to history. Mr. Ramsey continued to speak about honoring the rich history of contributions by individuals.

Mr. Medrano said he enjoyed a recent television program about Native Americans, African-Americans and Mexicanos who lived in the West.

Ms. Miles said she has an interest in celebrating history all year long, not just in February, as it is essential for students to know the importance of individuals who came before them in order to value of education.

Mr. Thurmond said he is moved by the rich traditions and contributions of African-American leaders in the community that benefited so many people and acknowledged their contribution.

Ms. Kronenberg said this community is a mosaic, as demonstrated by the Portola community represented at the meeting, pulling together to support their community.

MOTION: Mr. Ramsey moved approval of Resolution No. 65-0910: African-American History Month – February 2010. Mr. Medrano seconded. Mr. Medrano, Ms. Miles, Mr. Ramsey, Mr. Thurmond, and President Kronenberg voting yes, with no absences and no abstentions. Motion carried 5-0-0-0.

F.2 Consulting Group Approval

Superintendent Harter provided information regarding possibilities of voter support for a bond measure from the Godbe Research report. He reported recent action by the subcommittee asked to distribute a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) and interview firms that might assist the District with community assessment around support of a bond measure. He said that the RFQ was distributed to eleven firms with five responses. The subcommittee interviewed four firms and is recommending Media and Associates as bond assessment consultant.

Public Comment: none

Board Comment:

Ms. Kronenberg, as a subcommittee member, spoke about the groups interviewed, looking for a best match with the current climate of the District, and the determination that Kevin Reikes of Media and Associates was best experienced. Mr. Medrano said he was impressed with consultants' knowledge of political figures, particularly in Richmond. Mr. Thurmond asked for examples of some work by Media and Associates. Mr. Ramsey responded by highlighting the passage of three bonds for the District, a parcel tax, help with an anti-cession vote in Hercules, and the campaign around transfer of territory with the County. Mr. Reikes has been involved in eight measures and is focused on the core work for students. Mr. Medrano said that a bond measure will mean a great deal of work for the Board and community, and provides potential for local jobs for the area.

Motion: Mr. Ramsey moved to ratify the appointment of the firm Media and Associates selected as bond assessment consultant. Mr. Medrano seconded. Mr. Medrano, Ms. Miles, Mr. Ramsey, Mr. Thurmond, and President Kronenberg voted yes, with no abstentions and no absences. Motion carried 5-0-0-0.

G. DISCUSSION ITEMS

G.1 Portola Middle School Temporary Relocation

This item was moved to follow Consent Items.

Public Comment:

Board Comment:

H. UNFINISHED REQUESTS TO ADDRESS THE BOARD (continued from Item E)

None

I. COMMENTS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION AND SUPERINTENDENT

Mr. Ramsey spoke about the beginning of the second semester for students and staff, and a sense of optimism, hope and opportunity for the new year.

Mr. Medrano spoke about the local capacity building program to guarantee a percentage of hire in the county for construction projects.

Mr. Thurmond mentioned an upcoming Police Activities League local benefit for support to the people of Haiti. He said that the group is looking for partners to assist with their endeavor.

Ms. Miles acknowledged staff for hosting the community meetings to give opportunity for the public input. She acknowledged the extra hours and work involved but she said she felt it was essential to move the matter forward.

Ms. Kronenberg spoke about optimism and remaining aware of actions in Sacramento for legislative opportunities to share resources. She announced the upcoming Board Retreat scheduled on January 30, 2010.

J. THE NEXT SCHEDULED BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

Lovonya DeJean Middle School – January 30, 2010 – Governance Retreat

Lovonya DeJean Middle School – February 10, 2010

K. ADJOURNMENT

President Kronenberg adjourned the meeting at 10:20 PM.

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

BH:dh

AAM Approved 2/10/10
