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Board shows its faith in Culver

Wed, 03/04/2009 - 8:18am

Champaign schools Superintendent Arthur Culver receives a vote of confidence.

One can quarrel with the wisdom of granting another contract extension to Champaign schools Superintendent Arthur Culver, but there's no disputing it's an expression of support in Culver's leadership.

The school board has declared that Culver is its man for the foreseeable future.

By a 4-3 vote, the school board last week added another year to the three years remaining on Culver's contract. Two years ago, the board extended Culver's contract from four years to five.

It's hard to understand the point of routinely extending contracts not close to expiration. Frankly, it does not serve the best interests of taxpayers to be on the hook for big bucks if board members and the superintendent decide they can no longer live with each other. There also is the problem of extending the contract on the eve of a board election, a move that puts newly elected board members at a disadvantage.

But the board's overall relationship with Culver clearly is a good one, and there is no sign of serious discord.

Culver came from Texas to Champaign in 2002. Since then, he's had his hands full trying to meet the requirements of a consent decree negotiated before his arrival that is aimed at improving the performance of minority students. He's done a good job, so it's understandable a board majority would want to show its appreciation.

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Champaign Community-Police Forum Brings Out Supporters, Critics

Story date: Tuesday, March 29, 2011 from Illinois Public Media News



The leaders of a Champaign group committed to improving police and community relations say they need more participation, and input, from all corners of the population.

About 50 people Monday night attended the first community forum hosted by the Champaign Community and Police Partnership, or C-CAP. The group's goal is finding solutions to policing issues raised by the African-American community. C-CAP member Patricia Avery heads the Champaign-Urbana area

project, which works with juvenile delinquency prevention. She says Champaign Police are doing what they can to divert youth from the juvenile justice system.

"We have to work on providing more alternatives for the officers so when they are picking up (youths), they can't just turn them loose on the street," Avery said. "If they come into contact, they have to have somewhere for them to go. So our job as a community is to help them find solutions, find alternatives, for those kids that they do come in contact with."

One such option suggested by Avery is community conferencing - allowing police to place troubled youths before a panel made up of victims, offenders, and supporters to resolve the case among themselves.

Durl Kruse with C-U Citizens for Peace and Justice brought up the 2009 Champaign police fatal shooting of 15-year old Kiwane Carrington. He also cited 2010 statistics in Champaign County, showing a disproportionate number of black youths involved in felony and misdemeanor convictions.

Champaign Police Chief R.T. Finney says the numbers are debatable, but says they were brought up in an attempt to discredit initiatives like the Champaign Youth Police Academy, and other ideas started by C-CAP.

"And to ignore what C-CAP has been doing for over a decade, by just throwing out some statistics from the State's Attorney's office compiled last year, is just not correct," Finney said. "C-CAP understands exactly what's going on in the neighborhoods with our kids. And we have to work on that."

Kruse says C-CAP's partnership will only work when it's allowing everyone, including the police department's worst critics, to be part of the discussion.

Champaign City Council member Will Kyles, who's also on the C-CAP committee, says future forums will need a change of behavior between different cultures. C-CAP will hold quarterly forums throughout the year. The next has a focus on youth. It's scheduled for June 27th at the Don Moyer Boys and Girls Club.

(Photo by Jeff Bossert/WILL)

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CU-CitizenAccess

University-based reporting on poverty in central Illinois

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URBANA, ILLINOIS — When Brant Houston moved to the Champaign-Urbana, Illinois area from Columbia, Missouri to assume the University of Illinois's Knight Chair in Journalism, he did what he had long encouraged students to do in the classes he taught on computer assisted reporting: he trawled through census data to get a sense of his community.

The poverty rate immediately stuck out as far out of proportion to its presence in local news; in Houston's view, it appeared to be one of the defining characteristics of the community, but he suspected that residents without direct experience of it, particularly in the university community, likely did not know much about the poor in their midst. He decided to do some reporting.

[Read more about CU-CitizenAccess](#)

That was in 2007. Shortly afterward, Houston teamed up with U of I colleague Rich Martin, formerly of Virginia's *Roanoke Times*, where as managing editor he directed major projects covering Roanoke's own "invisible poverty." With a Knight Foundation Community Information Needs grant, some additional funds from the university, and a partnership with local paper the *News Gazette*, the two spent a year learning about how to build, maintain, and financially sustain a website; theirs launched as **CU-CitizenAccess** in January 2010. From day one the site featured meaty stories on economic issues in Champaign County, reported by two part-time professional reporters and a handful of grad students.

"The first major [story], which really surprised people, talked about the amount of poverty in the county and the kind of poverty in the county," recalls Houston. Nearly twenty percent of Champaign County residents live below the poverty line—what was particularly striking to Houston was the proportion of students among the poor. Another project, called "**Wilber Heights**," examined the decay of a neighborhood after its zoning regulations were changed from residential to industrial, rendering home maintenance all but impossible.

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“We’re looking into particular parts of the community that may not get reported on,” says Houston, who notes that the *News-Gazette* is, like newspapers all over the country, strapped for resources. In addition to U of I faculty members Houston and Martin, CU-Citizen Access employs two professional reporters, each of whom work thirty hours a week. Martin has designed a “covering poverty” class as part of the project; student work from this class is a major source of the site’s content, as is work contributed by other masters students and undergraduates at the school.

The site has built connections across university departments and throughout local media. It occasionally produces stories for the local NPR affiliate. U of I’s School of Library Information Sciences has set up computer labs in underserved areas, and CU-CitizenAccess is trying to find ways to use the labs as meeting places where journalism students, faculty, and local journalists can collaborate on projects and be accessible to the communities they aim to serve. The labs are also an important part of making the site itself available to households that might not have Internet access.

“This is a research and development project,” says Houston. “We are trying out things, both in terms of newsgathering and information presentation. Some will work and some won’t.”

The site’s financial freedom puts it in a better position to experiment than most. As a non-profit housed within a university, the site is free of many of the fiscal pressures that face other operations. Houston devotes some time to fundraising but, because of the university’s equipment and its steady supply of students to write for the website, “we’ve got a minimum amount of sustainability,” he says.

-Kathy Gilsinan

CU-CitizenAccess Data

Name: CU-CitizenAccess

URL: CU-CitizenAccess.org

City: Urbana

State: [Illinois](#)

Type of Coverage: [General](#)

Year Founded: [2009](#)

Staff Size: [2-5 Editorial](#) [1 Business](#)

Active Volunteers: [11-30](#)

Business Type: [Nonprofit](#)

Institutional Support: [Knight Foundation](#) [University](#) [Other Foundation](#)

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Principal Staff: Brant Houston, co-director; Rich Martin, co-director; Pam Dempsey, project coordinator.

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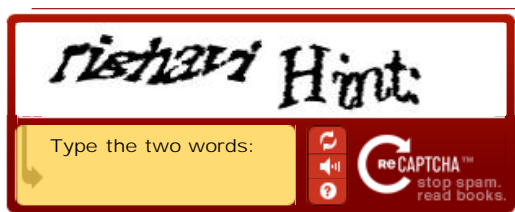
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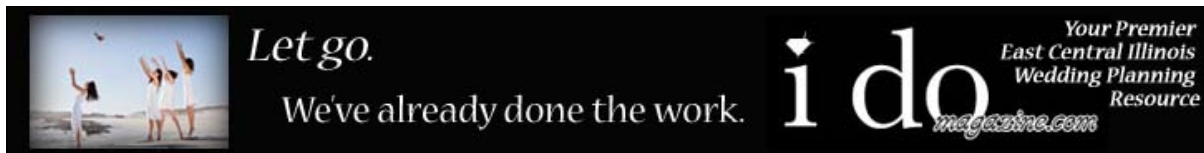


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No vendetta in earlier case, Culver says

Wed, 02/18/2004 - 3:00pm | **Anne Cook**

LONGVIEW, Texas – Randall Coggin had worked for the Longview Independent School District for more than 30 years when he had a confrontation with a new superintendent.

Early in March 1999 Arthur Culver took charge of the east Texas district where Coggin was supervisor of the district's career and technology education department.

Since he joined the Champaign district in 2002, Culver's hiring – and firing – policies have been questioned, and Coggin's story shows there was some precedent in Texas.

A popular basketball coach in Champaign was reinstated this month after the teachers' union raised due-process concerns over his firing, following an incident between the coach and Culver's son. And Culver has brought several administrators with him from Texas to the Champaign district, prompting some criticism early in his tenure.

"I was one of the highest paid administrators in the district and had been absent three days in 30 years," Coggin said in a telephone interview. "He'd been here three weeks and he pounced on me. He accused me of a bunch of stuff and said I should resign or retire or it's going to get ugly."

"I said, 'Get your ugly out and come on.'"

The dispute that followed ended up in court later that year, and the court ruling last year cost the Longview district and its insurers more than \$350,000, including a check for \$270,000 just paid to Coggin and more than \$100,000 in lawyers' fees, a figure that's still not final.

"It was very unfortunate," Culver said today. "There was no vendetta. Some things were brought to my attention about Coggin and his employment that had to be dealt with early. I have nothing against Mr. Coggin personally. But as a superintendent, you're forced sometimes to deal with things you don't want to deal with, but because of your responsibility, you have to anyway. You have to be fair and consistent with everyone.

"I really hated it, but the things brought to my attention were of such a serious nature, had I not dealt with them, I would have not acted as a responsible superintendent."

Initially, Coggin said, the district charged him with misappropriating cars.

"I ran the best department in Texas and my kids had new cars to work on," Coggin said. "He (Culver) said the district didn't know about those cars. All I had to do was to find travel reports signed by previous superintendents from when I went to Shreveport to pick them up, and that fell apart.

"When I didn't just fall over, they came up with sexual harassment charges," he said. "I thought, where did they get that?"

Coggin was suspended from late March through August while the district conducted an investigation.

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"I found out they grilled every female employee I ever had," he said. "In court, the judge asked one employee, 'What kind of a hug was that? A church-house hug? A peck on the cheek?'"

Official charges against Coggin, which were all rejected by the courts, included sexually harassing female subordinates; using school resources for personal benefit; impeding the investigation of his behavior; and falsifying asbestos records.

"The charges turned out to be rather silly – he went to a lady, congratulated her for doing a great job, hugged her, things like that," said Coggin's attorney, Charles Clark of Tyler, Texas, who also described the auditing charges and others like asbestos infractions as "nitpicking stuff."

Things came to a head at the end of that summer. Culver sent Coggin a letter on Aug. 12, 1999, outlining the charges against him. On Aug. 24, Coggin filed required documents asking for a hearing by a state officer, and he also sent notice to the district.

The state commissioner denied the hearing because he thought the request hadn't been filed by the deadline. Coggin's attorneys contended that the postmark, not the date received, determined the deadline, and they also contended school board members knew the deadline had been met, a key point in the lawsuit.

Meanwhile, Coggin, who had just learned he had cancer, sent Culver a letter saying he needed to take the sick leave he'd accumulated, a year of it, and he said that depending on the outcome of his treatment, he might resign or retire at the end of it.

But while Coggin was in the hospital for treatment, the board convened Sept. 13 and fired him, an action that led to the lawsuit filed Nov. 13, 1999.

"Coggin attempted to notify the state that he intended to appeal the proposal to fire, and he filed the appeal," Clark said. "The state said it was filed late. That was absolutely wrong, the school district knew it was wrong, but two weeks later, there was a board meeting, he wasn't notified, and they fired him."

Culver said board attorneys advised Longview trustees to deny Coggin's request for a hearing because it violated state law.

"The board considered it and I was in favor of (granting the hearing), but attorneys said the board had no authority to do that and it was either back to work or termination," Culver said. "We decided based on the charges, it wasn't right to bring him back to work because we wouldn't do that for another employee because we considered the behavior to be not remediable."

He still believes attorneys' advice was correct and he said the Texas Education Agency ended up changing its procedures because of the case.

"We came to court, the court tried the case and found none of the allegations had any basis in evidence," Clark said. "It found Coggin's due process was violated, and it awarded him back pay, future earnings, mental anguish and attorney's fees."

The school district took the case to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 5th Circuit in New Orleans, then to a 15-judge panel at the New Orleans court, which concluded that the district had fired Coggin too quickly, and finally all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court.

"The Supreme Court made the fastest turnaround I've ever seen on a case," Clark said. "It was filed on Friday and rejected on Monday."

The decision was announced in November 2003, ending a three-year standoff.

"There were unique politics at work that had a profound impact on what happened in federal court," Culver said. "I believe that significantly impacted the outcome. No one could believe that ruling."

"We just got paid a month ago, and I'm filing a motion for additional attorneys' fees," Clark said.

Coggin said he's healthy again and busier than ever working in construction, building biplanes and working on other projects.

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(Updated every 5 minutes)

He said Longview residents reacted negatively to the district's action and voted the two school board members who backed Culver in the dispute and in other matters off the board in the next election.

"I've never understood what happened," Clark said. "In my opinion, it was like he came into the district and was given a hit list – get rid of these people. And he did."

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Three DeKalb school chief finalists: All run much smaller districts

1:43 pm March 29, 2011, by Maureen Downey

Did a quick search and rundown of the three finalists for DeKalb school chief: Here is some background on each of them:



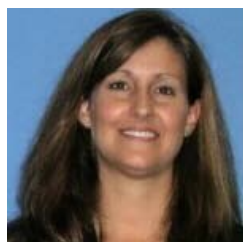
Arthur Culver

Arthur Culver: He is the superintendent in Champaign, Illinois and [has been suggested in the Illinois media](#) as a candidate for the Chicago's school chief job.

In 2009, the Champaign school board voted 4-3 to extend his contract. In 2007, the board extended Culver's contract from four years to five. His contract now goes to 2012. According to the local newspaper, Culver earns \$226,049 a year.

Culver had been school chief in the Longview Independent School in Texas. ([Here is a story about a controversy](#) that followed Culver from Texas to Illinois.)

Culver came from Texas to Champaign in 2002. [According to the newspaper in East Center Illinois](#), the News-Gazette, "Since then, he's had his hands full trying to meet the requirements of a consent decree negotiated before his arrival that is aimed at improving the performance of minority students. He's done a good job, so it's understandable a board majority would want to show its appreciation."



Lillie Cox

Dr. Lillie Cox: Became superintendent of Hickory Public [Schools](#) in 2009, the first female in the job. At the time, she was 37 and the assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction at Alamance-Burlington School System in Alamance County. Hickory hired her for a four-year contract at a base salary of \$145,000. She is a former high school and middle school teacher as well as a principal and assistant principal. ([See Hickory Daily Record story on her hiring.](#))

At the time, Sarah Talbert, school board chairwoman, told the Hickory Daily Record: "We had two interviews with Dr. Cox — one long one and one short one," she said. "Her experience, vision, drive and demeanor set her apart."

Her quote at time: "It seemed like the right time and the right place. The board has a dedication to diversity and ensuring that all backgrounds are successful."



Gloria Davis

Dr. Gloria Davis: Became school chief in Decatur, Ill., in 2006. She came from Dodge City, Kan., where she has been superintendent since 2001. Davis was the first African-American female school district superintendent in Kansas.

She was hired in Illinois at an annual salary of \$175,000. When she was hired in 2006, Jan Mandernach, Decatur school board president, told the [Business Journal of Midcentral Illinois](#): "She has all the qualities we were looking for in a superintendent and meets the criteria identified by the community. She has a lot

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of energy and experience in working with groups in a community to build consensus.”

Why she took the job in Illinois: “One was the location. I’m a St. Louis native, and my mother and brothers and other family members still live there. The other was the school district in terms of the goals the district had set for furthering academic achievement and the quality of community as it relates to continuing to have a quality school system.”

An educator for 36 years, Davis began as a teacher, She was an elementary and middle school principal before becoming an assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction in the University City School District in the St. Louis area. She holds a master’s degree in educational administration and a doctorate in educational administration and policy-making at St. Louis University.

–From Maureen Downey, for the AJC Get Schooled blog

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Dunwoody Mom

March 29th, 2011
1:52 pm

I look forward to hearing from these candidates Thursday evening!!!

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Ben B

March 29th, 2011
2:00 pm

DeKalb County is a heck of a lot different than Hickory, NC in size and diversity. It looks on paper that Dr. Davis or Mr. Culver would make better candidates. We will await more information on Mr. Culver.

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Dr NO

March 29th, 2011
2:25 pm

Culver..no way we need more corrupt politicians/leaders here and IL is chock full of them.

Cox...dont see it happening...(fill in blank).

David...no way we need more corrupt politicians/leaders here and IL is chock full of them.

[Link](#) | [Report this comment](#)

Tonya C.

March 29th, 2011
2:36 pm

Ummm, how about they find some stronger candidates. This is the pick of the litter after a national search?

Culver...Nope. We have enough controversy and corruption as it stands.

Cox...how long was she actually in the classroom? I mean really?

David...why is she willing to move now if she was so gung-ho to get closer to home? And I'm leary of teachers that get masters in educational leadership and not in a content area, because they tend to have gone into education purely for the power grab.

The biggest issue with all of these people is that none of them come from districts of any size. If I was a DCPS parent, I'd want someone already familiar with a large bureaucracy and how it functions.

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Teacher Reader

March 29th, 2011
2:37 pm

I believe the Culver would indeed clear house and take a no-nonsense look at education for our kids. I don't like Cox, because she does not have enough inner city experience has only been in her current job for a year and a half. In an article that I read about Davis, it seems to me that she would be willing to play politics with the board, as she is now in her

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My latest tweets

- Corporal punishment: Why are we still hitting students in schools? <http://bit.ly/efDiqH> 3 hours ago
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- Here are the three candidates for DeKalb school chief. No internal candidate. <http://bit.ly/flIXKA> 24 hours ago
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- Still waiting for state Supreme Court ruling on fate of charters <http://bit.ly/hgDykw> 1 day ago

All AJC blogs »

current position. We do not need someone like that here.

[Link](#) | [Report this comment](#)

Jo
March 29th, 2011
2:39 pm

Maureen — can you get — and make available — full vitas (resumes) on each of these candidates? I want to know where they obtained their undergraduate and graduate education. I also want to know what they have published and read what they have published. Finally I want to know about their professional involvements and achievements, as well as their personal involvements and achievements.

[Link](#) | [Report this comment](#)

JET
March 29th, 2011
2:40 pm

Women have always to fight for equal rights. Here is a typical example of being in the same position and the male, who also happen to be less educated than these 2 women, is making a lot more money than them. I hope this is remedied when the job offer is made.

[Link](#) | [Report this comment](#)

Maureen Downey
March 29th, 2011
2:44 pm

@Jo, They will be forthcoming shortly. This is all I could scrape together via an Internet search of news articles.

Maureen

[Link](#) | [Report this comment](#)

Tonya C.
March 29th, 2011
2:48 pm

@Maureen. Thanks for providing at least this. You would think the the Dekalb board would have the forethought to post the CVs for the candidates on the main website themselves. You shouldn't need to 'scrape together' anything at all.

[Link](#) | [Report this comment](#)

Gung Ho Granny
March 29th, 2011
2:49 pm

From what has been said above, I am not impressed with any of them.

[Link](#) | [Report this comment](#)

Dr. John Trotter
March 29th, 2011
2:51 pm

Hey folks, next door, you have Sam King. He's must not have applied... because not a one of the current finalists can touch him. Wow. School boards never cease to amaze me...or, should I say, search firms?

[Link](#) | [Report this comment](#)

Dr. John Trotter
March 29th, 2011
2:58 pm

Note that there was a 4 to 3 vote to renew Culver's contract in 2009. I'd say he was in a heap of trouble, wouldn't you? A real slasher. After 36 years of experience, Davis is willing to leave her mom and family? Hmm. Something in the milk ain't cleans, folks. Cox hasn't got a chance. Everyone knows that urban systems hire African Americans (Rhee was the exception in D. C.), and suburban and rural systems hire whites (Sam King was the exception in Rockdale County; it was majority white when King was selected). Cox is also probably way too inexperienced as well. So, this is what you paid untold thousands to a search firm to come up with? You should have called me. I would have done it for free and landed you much better finalists than these. Ha!

[Link](#) | [Report this comment](#)

huh?
March 29th, 2011
2:59 pm

Am I being paranoid (again) or is this list of candidates already stacked in favor of Dr. Davis?

Culver? Sounds like might need to stay away from dramarama for a bit. Plus, if he had any inkling that he might be considered for Chicago's chief, why would he want to transplant here and inherit a mess with all NEW players? I'm just not feeling it....

Cox? Well, it's pretty much been said already, so...No.

Dr Davis? Lots of experience and a really long and sincere sounding quote that includes words like achievement, community, quality and other blahdy blah blah stuff that looks good on paper.

Well, that's really all we need, right?

It's only a "pool" of candidates if more than one of them is even slightly qualified for the job.

[Link](#) | [Report this comment](#)

Write Your Board Members

March 29th, 2011
3:01 pm

Dr. Trotter,

What motivation would Sam King have for leaving Rockdale where he is well respected for the mess that is DeKalb. I am certain her reads the paper and watches the local news. He is happy and doing well where he is. I am guessing he doesn't need the stress!

[Link](#) | [Report this comment](#)

Dr. John Trotter

March 29th, 2011
3:25 pm

You guys know how critical I can be of administrators in general and superintendents in particular. But, I do have a few within my radar screen who I think do a good job — and I acknowledge that being a superintendent is a tough job. It is very difficult to please all. I can understand that Dr. Sam King may not have wanted to be the supe in DeKalb, though he started his educational career there. DeKalb today is much different than when Dr. King taught there a few years back. I have followed his career, and I know that when he was an administrator in the school building, he took care of discipline, and the teachers loved him. He's a good school man.

I also liked John DeCotis, Superintendent of Fayette County, until his recent retirement. DeCotis knows how to treat people, and, again, discipline in Fayette County is good to this day in its schools, relatively speaking. Blake Bass, Superintendent in Coweta County, recently announced his retirement. By and large, discipline is strong in Coweta too. I always thought that Blake Bass was the son of Newnan High's legendary coach, Max (Hoss) Bass, but I found out a while back that this was not the case. Good luck in your retirement, Mr. Bass! I also like Craig Dowling who is doing a good job as supe in Harris County. Full Disclosure: My brother serves on the school board there. Mr. Dowling was Assistant Superintendent on Dr. King's staff in Rockdale before taking the helm in Harris County.

I am very suspicious of anyone who will leave momma and friends to traverse this country to take over a school system. Sounds like hired hands...which is exactly what they are — hirelings. They come for the power and the money. How can they come for the kids? They don't even know the kids. They are not even from Georgia! Ha! What do we call people who will jump from one bed (school board) to another bed (school board) — just depending on the money? Maureen won't let me use this term on this family blog. You'll have to wait for my book.

[Link](#) | [Report this comment](#)

Write Your Board Members

March 29th, 2011
3:25 pm

The Board actually picked these finalists from a larger pool that the Consultants recommended. Rumor is they even pulled one up that the consultants didn't recommend.

This worries me.

While I won't pre-judge, I am disappointed and concerned that none of them have run a system with even 20,000 students.

Disappointing. Not surprising since we still have our incompetent board.

[Link](#) | [Report this comment](#)

Dr. John Trotter

March 29th, 2011
3:27 pm

You guys know how critical I can be of administrators in general and superintendents in particular. But, I do have a few within my radar screen who I think do a good job — and I acknowledge that being a superintendent is a tough job. It is very difficult to please all. I can understand that Dr. Sam King may not have wanted to be the supe in DeKalb, though he started his educational career there. DeKalb today is much different than when Dr. King taught there a few years back. I have followed his career, and I know that when he was an administrator in the school building, he took care of discipline, and the teachers loved him. He's a good school man.

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[Link](#) | [Report this comment](#)

Concerned DeKalb Resident

March 29th, 2011
3:37 pm

I did some online research on all three and for the most part, I tend to agree with some previous comments.

Arthur Culver's history raises a BIG RED FLAG – makes you wonder how many of his cronies he will want to bring with him, not to mention the baggage from Texas.

Dr. Gloria Davis – seems odd that she's looking to move away from her family when that was such a big reason for her to go to Illinois. Nonetheless, she seems to have some good qualifications.

As far as Dr. Lillie Cox is concerned, well, although she would be coming from a smaller school system and she is obviously the youngest of the three, her credentials are excellent. She is very active in the community, is on boards of several school groups, has worked her way up the ladder from middle school teacher to high school teacher, asst. superintendent, etc., seems to be very energetic, intelligent, well-rounded.

Do a simple google search on each and it will give you an interesting overview.

Found a recent video/interview with Lillie Cox:

<http://titancast.titantv.com/p/whky/v/Rob-Eastwood-interviews-Dr-Lillie->

[Cox-Superintendent-of-Hickory-Schools/1ACF1HLP.aspx](http://www.whky.com/news.asp?mode=detail&articleID=16006)

A recent article mentioning some of Dr. Cox's Hickory School System programs:

<http://www.whky.com/news.asp?mode=detail&articleID=16006>

[Link](#) | [Report this comment](#) |

David Sims
March 29th, 2011
3:37 pm

Get the white one. You could just do that and have less chance of being disappointed than all the probing and analysis in the world could do for you.

[Link](#) | [Report this comment](#) |

Hope
March 29th, 2011
3:47 pm

We really can't blame the board or the search firm for weak candidates (or at least, those with little to no experience in systems as large as Dekalb). How could anyone with integrity want anything to do with leadership in Dekalb schools? I'm surprised they were able to find three without criminal records, currently employed anywhere credible, willing to even consider the job. You have to be willing to participate in the status quo (dishonest, inefficient, favoritism, incompetence) or walk around with a target on your back. Is there a salary rate possible that would make either option worth while for anyone worth having?

[Link](#) | [Report this comment](#) |

Fedup
March 29th, 2011
4:00 pm

A 4-3 vote on a Super's continuance....spells P-R-O-B-L-E-M to me!!!

[Link](#) | [Report this comment](#) |

Outahere
March 29th, 2011
4:01 pm

So what can be said about a board that would even consider someone with the controversy in the background of Culver.... right on the heels of the mess with the old school chief? That speaks volumes! We're out of here!

[Link](#) | [Report this comment](#) |

2 cents
March 29th, 2011
4:01 pm

wow, the three best they could come up with?

one already lost a court case that cost over \$350000 lol; "bring the ugly" ; hmmm, just got a bad feeling about them

[Link](#) | [Report this comment](#) |

Fedup
March 29th, 2011
4:02 pm

And Dr. Lillie...girl, you best keep yourself in NC, honey.

[Link](#) | [Report this comment](#) |

Fedup
March 29th, 2011
4:05 pm

Trotter has something nice to say about a superintendent (King)...holy smokes – stop the presses!!

[Link](#) | [Report this comment](#) |

Tonya C.
March 29th, 2011
4:10 pm

Dr. Trotter:

I'm glad someone sees my point. If I had a job I truly wanted in an area I loved being in, Jesus would have to call me home on the mainline before I left. Just saying.

[Link](#) | [Report this comment](#) |

joe in tucker
March 29th, 2011
4:11 pm

...and i sure do wonder if Ms. Tyson is ready to give up her raise since she won't be in that position much longer?

[Link](#) | [Report this comment](#) |

Tad Jackson

March 29th, 2011

4:25 pm

For a coveted position, what would we make three student finalists do? Exactly. Have these three folks write an essay! A dang essay on how they think, teach, manage people, projects, and budgets! An essay!

<http://www.adixiediary.com>

[Link](#) | [Report this comment](#) |

@ joe

March 29th, 2011

4:26 pm

Tyson gets to keep her pay for a year after a new super begins.

[Link](#) | [Report this comment](#) |

Write Your Board Members

March 29th, 2011

4:28 pm

Again, I think we need to question whether these three were really the best this Board could do or does the board believe these are the three they they can control.

[Link](#) | [Report this comment](#) |

Bruce Wayne

March 29th, 2011

4:29 pm

Davis was fired from the Dodge City, Ks school district. She is a power hungry cut-throat and should not be given the chance for employment as a janitor, let alone a superintendent. She also scammed some tax money when she left, giving herself a lavish farewell party on the taxpayers dime. This district would do well to kick her to the curb.

[Link](#) | [Report this comment](#) |

oldtimer

March 29th, 2011

4:47 pm

Looks like the serch goes on.....

[Link](#) | [Report this comment](#) |

@ Write Your Board Members

March 29th, 2011

4:54 pm

If this is the best that DCSS can do, than the entire district is in even bigger trouble than I could have imagined.

[Link](#) | [Report this comment](#) |

catlady

March 29th, 2011

5:32 pm

So far....not so good.

Would love to see the creds of those the board did not bring to the finals. Can anyone get? Isn't that Open Records material?

[Link](#) | [Report this comment](#) |

Atlanta Media Guy

March 29th, 2011

5:42 pm

For the conspiracy theorists on here. They chose these three candidates for a reason and after hearing the public and the meeting on Thursday, the BOE will say they are listening to the people and will choose someone knowledgeable of running a large school system. They have found someone right here at the Palace! Ramona Tyson or could it be Dr. Morcease Beasley? Wonders never cease! How big are the budgets, of the systems these candidates are from? Interesting times!

[Link](#) | [Report this comment](#) |

Suavez

March 29th, 2011

6:29 pm

Dr.Cox, Please don't waste your time interviewing for the position unless the school board is paying for your travel expenses and putting you up in a plush hotel. There is no way in heck you are getting the job. Your skin color is not dark enough. Look at it as a free trip to Atlanta. Dekalb is starting to implode. It is becoming Clayton County North. If you value your childs education leave now.

[Link](#) | [Report this comment](#) |

Dr. Craig Spinks/
Augusta

March 29th, 2011

When was the last time that the DCSS was subjected to a comprehensive personnel audit by a competent, disinterested organization located outside Georgia? Were the results of that audit

-
- 6:36 pm released by the auditing firm directly to the media?
[Link](#) | [Report this comment](#)
-
- Intown Dweller
March 29th, 2011
6:55 pm Please, add another name to the list....Dr. Beverly Hall. We'll send her right over.
[Link](#) | [Report this comment](#)
-
- Champaign Teacher
March 29th, 2011
7:06 pm When Mr. Culver came to Champaign, it was under the condition that he finish his doctorate. He supposedly was 4-12 hours short. Several years later he is still Mr. Culver not Dr. Culver. The previous superintendent made \$125k and had 1 assistant super. Mr. Culver makes \$250K and has about 6 assistant super types. The schools in Champaign are underperforming, but shine when compared to the Decatur School System where Davis is coming from.
[Link](#) | [Report this comment](#)
-
- huh?
March 29th, 2011
7:07 pm Oh lawd Suavez, now there's an idea! Clayton and DeKalb can join forces against evildoers, ignorant and greedy superintendents, and power hungry board members, both Comissioners and Ed. It'd be a two for one for all! TWICE as many politicians and bottom feeders. Maybe Clayco can get the hook up to get us some public trans again! In return, we can give ya'll the inservice on how to make the most of having none at all....in respect to community leaders, that is.
[Link](#) | [Report this comment](#)
-
- Ed Johnson
March 29th, 2011
7:41 pm Another possible good sign: A learner...
“[Lillie Cox] said she is not walking into her new position with an agenda, and wants to see what the strengths of the system are.”
[Link](#) | [Report this comment](#)
-
- 30318 Teacher
March 29th, 2011
7:47 pm I worked with Dr. Cox in NC when she was a principal with Guilford Co. Schools (not DeKalb, but not Hickory either... This school was at least 85% free/reduced lunch). She wasn't in the classroom long, but she definitely worked hard to move up fast, earning an NC Principal Fellowship (google it-pretty impressive). As far as education, she completed her doctorate at UNC Chapel Hill while working as a principal and Executive Director in Greensboro. While she is young, I remember her being tough and effective as a leader.
[Link](#) | [Report this comment](#)
-
- Champaign Mom
March 29th, 2011
7:47 pm If I remember correctly, the vote to extend Culver's contract was *right* before BOE elections and one of the three Board Members said that it made no sense to tie the hands of the “new” BOE.

To be fair, he has had his hands tied with the Consent Decree, but there is A LOT of crony-ism and general baggage.
[Link](#) | [Report this comment](#)
-
- Dan
March 29th, 2011
7:51 pm Maureen, I am shocked to see the small mindedness and backward thinking of so many of your readers. We live in 2011 with an African American president who won the majority of the vote in states like North Carolina, Florida, and Virginia. Despite this, so many of the comments on this blog scoff at the idea that a white woman could be chosen and succeed in a diverse county like Dekalb. Really? Imagine if it was reversed and a black man was in the running for a majority white district. Would it be as acceptable to laugh at their candidacy? When your informed readership ends their myopic attention to race, and looks

at the real issues of teaching kids, they will see how they can build the county up and not tear it down.

[Link](#) | [Report this comment](#)

Dr. John Trotter

March 29th, 2011

7:55 pm

Folks: Let me let you guys in on a little secret...National superintendents and superintendent searches are jokes. The superintendents who are disasters are just re-cycled nationwide because the search firms have to have warm bodies to "sell" to the naive school boards. The search firms make unconscionable amounts of money to provide warmed-over, worn-out candidates who never made a difference in their previous jobs as superintendents but who are billed by the search firms as the "right fit" with "great vision." Oh, these candidates (like DeKalb's finalists) are presented to the school boards as "change agents" who are "data-driven" and who can "improve the test scores." As my grandfather would say, "Yeah, they're gonna crap if they eat regularly...that's about all they're gonna do."

The search firms feel compelled to presents these candidates as the next "saviors" of the school system. Then, again, sometimes the school board members already have a connection and want a particular person and really just need the search firms to provide them "cover"...so that it looks as though some large, national search took place. It is a little game that is played...sort of like the glitzy accounting firms telling the Fortune 500 CEOs what they want to hear. After all, they want to keep their contracts. So, we have situations like Enron. School systems are huge corporations. If a few school board members want a particular superintendent whom they met at a National School Board Conference meeting in San Francisco, then the search firms will accordingly "search" for this person and dutifully "recommend" this person which the school board already wants. (Yes, superintendents attend these affairs...for the express purpose of networking and finding jobs with more power and more money. This is one of the hidden agendas of the National School Board Conferences...networking.) I am quite confident that a few of the school board members have already bumped into one or two of the candidates before.

Now...who do the school board members want? I am not sure. I simply don't know. They could shock everyone if the school board chose the white woman. I don't think that the board will do this. Culver is certainly appears to be a slasher. His background looks more speckled than the average Dalmatian puppy. This leaves us with Davis. I figure that she has contacts already on the DeKalb Board of Education. I could be wrong. Culver definitely fits the Johnny Brown mold. Davis fits the Barbara Pulliam mold. Neither of these superintendents were liked very well in DeKalb and Clayton respectfully. The physical appearance of Culver is eerily like Edmond Heatley, Clayton's current superintendent who is certainly not getting rave reviews in that embattled school system. Actually, as one poster has already alluded to, DeKalb and Clayton are like two peas in a pod. The big difference between Atlanta and these two systems is that Atlanta has such a large tax base and can "contract out" any potential opposition. Beverly Hall and some Atlanta board members apparently feel that they have to consult with or get approval from Atlanta's Big White Business Mules. It's their money (campaign contributions) which are so important in citywide elections.

It will be amusing watching the DeKalb Board of Education trying to "sell" its choice to the public. It looks like the members of this school board went to the Draft and came up empty handed...like the Falcons in yesteryear. Perhaps they can turn to Free Agency...because these draft choices might bring in more problems than they can even think about solving. Cherry, Henson, Freeman, Brown, Lewis...Tyson (Interim)...Who now? Was this really an intensive, impartial nationwide search for the

best available candidate? I think not. Surely the search firm could have done better...if its mandate was to do so. Has DeKalb County Schools actually descended so low that it is scraping from the bottom of the proverbial barrel — with the salary and compensation package that it offers? I don't think that the school board was looking for the best. The target was perhaps already chosen. This, my friends, is how the process works. Don't metaphorically (or literally) kill me; I'm just the messenger. What to the preachers say? Speaking truth to power, eh? (c) MACE, March 29, 2011.

Afterthought: Should the MACE Picket Force show up Thursday night with signs reading, "Hey School Board: Search Again!?" Hmm.

[Link](#) | [Report this comment](#)

Ed Johnson
March 29th, 2011
7:59 pm

A definite good sign: Holy cow, she talks to and learns from, gasp, dropouts!...

<http://titancast.titantv.com/p/whky/v/Rob-Eastwood-interviews-Dr-Lillie-Cox-Superintendent-of-Hickory-Schools/1ACF1HLP.aspx>

Thanks, Concerned DeKalb Resident, for the posting the link.

[Link](#) | [Report this comment](#)

amazed
March 29th, 2011
8:03 pm

DeKalb County Schools has more info on their experience and accomplishments on their website. See the top of the main screen.

[Link](#) | [Report this comment](#)

To DeKalb BOE,
Please....
March 29th, 2011
8:05 pm

Take Ed Heatley!!!

[Link](#) | [Report this comment](#)

PatDowns
March 29th, 2011
8:29 pm

Culver – a Crawford clone

Davis – A Bev Hall wannabe

Cox – a throw in for "dye-verse-itee"

[Link](#) | [Report this comment](#)

Suavez
March 29th, 2011
8:30 pm

Dan-how do you like your crow served-grilled or roasted? The racist DeKalb school board will not choose a white person regardless of how qualified they are. You can bank on it.

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