

By a 4-2 vote, the Wake Board of Education voted to hire retired Brigadier General Anthony Tata as the system's next superintendent for an annual salary of \$250,000, beginning January 31. Following his military retirement, General Tata has spent the last 19 months as Chief Operating Officer of the public schools in Washington, D.C, where he managed purchasing, food service, technology and other support areas for the school system. He has no experience in instruction or academic leadership.

Board members John Tedesco, Debra Goldman, Chris Malone and Deborah Prickett voted to hire the General, and they praised the search process. Board members Carolyn Morrison and Kevin Hill voted against the hiring, though both said they would support General Tata once he arrived to take the post. Board member Anne McLaurin was not able to attend due to work responsibilities that she was unable to reschedule for the meeting (which was announced on 48-hours notice), and member Keith Sutton also was absent, citing the short notice given for the meeting.

A West Point graduate, General Tata spent 28 years in the military and has written thrill novels, according to his official website, which highlight his novels, written as "A.J. Tata." His statement accepting the post is online on the WCPSS website, along with a bio. Because he is a graduate of the Broad Center program on educational management, he will have a Broad adviser during his first year and WCPSS will receive three audits from the Broad Center at no charge. The Broad Center, based in Los Angeles, trains nontraditional leaders for leadership in education. General Tata also frequently appears on Fox News as a commentator and has blogged extensively for Andrew Breitbart's website.

Board member Carolyn Morrison read a statement objecting to the hiring of a non-educator. Her statement is online at WRAL's site, along with WRAL's summary. Dr. Morrison praised General Tata's service to his nation in the military, but noted that he has had no experience in instructional leadership and that his experience fell short of what was needed for the largest school system in the state.

Ms. Prickett said "General Tata is...inspiring and qualified." Mr. Tedesco said he would bring needed expertise in "operational dynamics," which he said have been a problem in our district and that General Tata's experience directing 90,000 soldiers in Afghanistan would prove useful experience. Chair Ron Margiotta said his military experience would complement the districts efforts and needs.

The *News and Observer* story is online as well.

Board Vice-Chair Debra Goldman chaired the Superintendent Search committee and spearheaded the selection of Illinois-based search firm Heidrick & Struggles to field the candidates. The firm was paid \$82,500 plus expenses, almost twice the fee of the second highest bidder for the Superintendent's search. Ms. Goldman said that more than 120 applicants were screened by the firm, and 20 candidates were interviewed. Eleven were sent to the Search Committee for review, complete with videotaped interviews and from

there, three were interviewed in person on December 1 by WCPSS Board members at the North Raleigh Hilton.