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Dear National Reading Conference Members:

Now that we've had a chance to settle down after celebrating the Winter Solstice, U.S. Presidential Inauguration, Groundhog Day, and other miscellaneous winter holidays, it is time to get back to the business of rolling out our organization's name change. This e-blast is to review what's happened so far and to outline what will happen next.

First, a reminder of the history:

- In 2007 NRC President Patricia Edwards initiated a listserv exploratory conversation regarding a name change. Because some interest was shown, she appointed an ad hoc committee to solicit names and conduct a straw vote (n=420 responses). This work left us with the name Association of Literacy Research for formal consideration by the Board of Directors.
- Unfortunately, the recommended name was quite like the College Reading Association's new name, Association of Literacy Educators and Researchers (ALER). As a result, our Board of Directors agreed to reconsider the legal feasibility of several additional names from among those collected by the ad hoc committee, as well as a process for determining whether NRC members desired a new name and what the new name would be.
- The Board chose several names deemed legally available and asked members to rank these via a survey in November 2008 (n=458). Literacy Research Association came in first. Thus, a ballot was prepared pitting our current name, National Reading Conference, against the name Literacy Research Association, and a vote was scheduled for the 2008 Business Meeting. Proxy ballots were sent, collected by mail, and tallied, and following an attendance check against proxy votes and membership status, the in-person vote took place with proxy votes added to the mix.

Our vote was 196 in favor of the name Literacy Research Association, and 73 against it. We are fortunate that there were many opportunities for both virtual and face-to-face discussions prior to the final vote, despite the glitch that precluded chance for discussion at the Business Meeting. Indeed, given the ratio of votes, it's hard to imagine a speech that would have garnered a different outcome.

What happens next? As you might imagine, name changes don't take place overnight, and we will continue to be known as the National Reading Conference for a while longer. The ALER vote was in fall 2007, with their first conference to be held under the new name in fall 2009. We will likely follow a similar timeline. We have to attend to such matters as incorporation, bylaws, stationery, Website, wikis, and so on.

To determine the timeline and activities, I've appointed an ad hoc committee. Chaired by our Vice President, Patricia Anders, it also includes Lee Gunderson, Laurie Henry, David Lund, Ellen McIntyre, Heidi Mesmer, Tom Wolsey, and, as *ex officio* members, Janice Almasi, our Board Liaison, and Christopher Roper, our new Executive Director. The group is now busily brainstorming a preliminary report to the February Executive Board meeting and a final report to the Board of Directors at its May meeting. Please approach any of these committee members with your ideas for this important transition.

Respectfully,
Kathleen A. Hinchman, President
National Reading Conference