

**Central Falls School District
Board of Trustees
Minutes**

March 14, 2006

I. Call to Order:

The Central Falls School District Board of Trustees Meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by Chairperson, Mr. Robert Canavan.

Present were: Mr. Robert Canavan, Chairperson

Ms. Ana Cecilia Rosado

Mr. Gus Silva

Mr. Joseph Faria

Ms. Ana-Cano Morales

Ms. Mary Lou Perez

Mr. Joel Roseman

II. Public Comments:

Mr. Bert Brousseau, ex teacher at the High School, spoke in support of Paulette Barden. He said that he was sad when he found out about the problem at the High School and that Mrs. Barden's integrity was

questioned.

Mr. Robert Canavan asked attorney Piccirilli if this was appropriate. The attorney answered that personal matters should not be subject of public comments until action is taken by the school department, which has not happened yet. The attorney said that the comments would be inappropriate. Mr. Canavan overruled him and allowed comments as long as it did not get out of hand.

Mr. Brousseau continued saying that Central Falls is small and everyone knows everyone else and that when he was at the High School he was responsible for fund raisers, candy sales, etc. He collected the money and gave it to Paulette who put the money in the box. Mr. Brousseau continued by saying that never was any money taken. They handled a lot of money together. He asked the Board to use their common sense in this case since Paulette is a woman who has done tremendous things for the School system.

Mr. Charles VanGorden, ex High School Principal, said that he did not trust any one more than Mrs. Barden. Paulette Barden was his Administrative Assistant. She is the most talented, honest and honorable person in the school department. Honorable then and now and she never knowingly do anything wrong.

Mr. Joe Aica, ex teacher at the High School, said that he wanted to second everything Mr. Brousseau said and he was there to support

Paulette. He said that she is an exceptional worker at the school department. He said the same in three languages.

Ms. Elizabeth Crowley, a 38 year employee in Central Falls and a friend of Paulette for 40 years also spoke. She said that she was there to support Paulette and she can not say anything bad about Ms. Paulette Barden. Ms. Crowley also said that everybody makes mistakes. This is a case of poor judgment and she has already paid for it. She asked the board simply place a note in Paulette's personnel folder and keep her employed.

Mr. Kevin Ornazian, ex teacher at the High School, was there to support Paulette. He worked very closely to Paulette and he has never met a better person than her for his 20 years. She is a very important asset to the school department and an excellent secretary. He implored the Board not to fire her.

Mr. Tony Rainone, former employee at the High School, was there to support Paulette. He said that Paulette had to do deposits and never was there any money missing. He thinks that there is not a dishonest bone in her body. He asked the board to consider it.

Jasmine, former student at the Central Falls High School and 2001 graduated, spoke in support of Joe Handy, basketball team coach. Mr. Canavan said that that was a union matter. Ms. Jane Sessums replied that the contract was between the Union and the school district.

Mr. Canavan said that it had to wait until next month, but Jasmine said that they can not wait that long. Then Mr. Canavan allowed her to read the letter. She asked the Board not to terminate his employment.

Arlene Fonseca, a basketball player, spoke in support of Joe Handy. She said that he has done more that any other teacher can do. She also said that now they are winning and asked the Board to consider what they are doing.

Mr. Zapata, a football player spoke in support of Moe Jackson. He said that the team never gives up because of the coach. When he does not get along with teachers he can talk to the coach.

Luis Rivera, a football player spoke in support of Moe Jackson. He said that Mr. Jackson has gotten to know them and nobody wants to see the coach leave.

III. Approval of Minutes:

Mr. Joel Roseman motioned to approve the minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gus Silva and unanimously approved by the Board.

Ms. Mary Lou Perez said the minutes of the last executive session

meeting will be mailed to the board members' houses.

IV. Schedule of Bills:

Mr. Joel Roseman motioned to approve the schedule of bills. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gus Silva and unanimously approved by the Board.

V. Communication:

No communications

VI. Reports:

A. Administration:

Dr. Watkins informed the Board that on Thursday teacher-parent conference will be taking place in the schools except for the High School. On Friday, the district will be holding their professional development day in all the schools K-8. Dr. Watkins invited the Board members to meet the parents during the teacher-parent conference.

Dr. Watkins congratulated the High School Attendance Task Force headed by Manuela Raposo, Larry DeCoste, David Disano, Dan Davis,

Sherry Cruz and Vielka Rollins.

B. Chairperson:

Mr. Canavan said that he did not have a report at this time.

C. Other:

Ms. Mary Lou Perez mentioned that the two positions of the Board had been filled and the names will be made public on 3/23/2006 during the Board of Regents meeting. There will be three new openings in June and there are six members interested in openings. Mr. Joel Roseman said that there may not be any openings if Board Members choose to stay.

Mr. Joe Travers asked how the process worked and Mr. Joel Roseman explained. The committee is Ms. Mary Lou Perez and himself.

VII. Personnel Matters:

A. Dr. Watkins recommended that the following appointments be made:

Marla Colleta-Temporary Special Education Teacher, Calcutt Middle School, effective February 14, 2006

Allison Vales- Temporary Physical Education/Health Teacher, High School, effective March 13, 2006

Lorna Thompson-Long Term Social Worker Substitute, District wide, effective March 1, 2006

VIII. Approval of Appointments:

Mr. Gus Silva motioned to approve. The motion was seconded by Ms. Ana Cecilia Rosado and unanimously approved by the Board.

IX. New Business:

A. Instruction Update: The Superintendent spoke about NECAP results. She said that the results will be released on March 22 by the Commissioner. On March 27 there will be a session for School Board Members at 9:00 a.m. at the Radisson to explain the results. She also said that a school classification will be released in two weeks. We do have preliminary results but the final information will be released on March 23, 2006.

B. Update on recommendations from the Annenberg Institute: Dr. Watkins mentioned that the leadership team (all the administrators) recommended focusing on four areas starting with student

expectation, instruction, behavior, and ESL program.

C. By-Laws for the Board of Trustees: Attorney Piccirilli said that on January 19, 2006 the by-laws were distributed and he recommended adopting them.

Ms. Ana Cano-Morales motioned to approve. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gus Silva and unanimously approved by the Board.

D. Central Falls High School Program of Studies: Dr. Watkins recommended approving the student expectations for student learning.

Motion to approve by Ms. Ana Cano-Morales seconded by Mr. Joel Roseman and unanimously approved by the Board.

E. Student Suspension Policy: Dr. Watkins said that page 2 of the policy has recommendations for elementary, Middle School and High School that need to be adopted.

Mr. Joel Roseman asked if they are part of the suspension policy. Dr. Watkins replied saying that this is new from RIDE but yes, we can still suspend, but once we get to 11 days, we have to provide alternative forms of education. The policy is a new mandate from RIDE.

Ms. Ana Cano-Morales asked how it fits with alternative education

that Mrs. Roseman presented. She also asked if it would hinder that program. Dr. Watkins answered “no”.

Ms. Ana Cecilia Rosado asked what adjusting school day means. Dr. Watkins said that the child can stay longer.

Mr. Joel Roseman asked if the attorney had reviewed the policy. Attorney Piccirilli answer “yes the policy can move”.

Motion to approve by Ana Cano-Morales seconded by Mr. Joseph Faria and unanimously approved by the board.

F. Student Attendance: Dr. Watkins distributed the chart in colors to all the board members.

Manuela Raposo explained to the Board the plan that was developed regarding student tardiness. They will have prizes and a dance or a perfect attendance assembly. Parents are also getting involved and offering suggestions. She said that the last two meetings have been very positive.

Mr. Joel Roseman asked to double check numbers with SchoolMax because last year’s numbers were different. Carol Ann Pickett was in charge of tardiness last year and it was 75-80 days, this year 250/days. Mr. Joe Travers said that it is worst now than it has ever been.

Manuela mentioned that she is planning on one day during the week to input tardiness.

Mr. Joel Roseman said that it is important that the front office staff enter information correctly.

Carol-Anne Pickett said that there is a tremendous amount of information that is collected and needs to be inputted.

Ms. Mary Lou Perez said that EdConnect is an excellent way to communicate and urged its use.

Dr. Watkins said that tardiness and attendance is a problem that has to be solved by everybody and starting on March 27, 2006 all parents are going to be notified of this problem.

Mr. Canavan asked where the holding area will be located. Dr. Watkins replied saying that we would find a place. Dr. Watkins continued saying that the next step is going to be more drastic. It is working in other school districts. Students have to understand that if they do not come to school there will be consequences.

Mr. Canavan said that parents need to be informed.

Dr. Watkins said that the parents will be informed. It is going to take

massive work. We have funds from PSI to support this and RIDE is aware of this.

Mr. Joel Roseman asked if it was not a suspension. Dr. Watkins said that this is a consequence and she invited students and parents to give strategies. Mr. Joel Roseman said that EdConnect should be included in the discipline plan.

Ms. Mary Lou Perez suggested that volunteers be used to input student tardiness in the computer. Mary Lou also asked if this would be an issue of confidential information. Mr. Piccirilli replied that they would have to take an oath.

No vote was necessary.

G. Compensatory Services: Dr. Watkins said that the document was for the Board's information. They could present questions and discuss it at the next board meeting.

H. District Budget for 2006-2007: Dr. Watkins said that the budget was a draft of what we are presenting to RIDE. She and Bob have been working very closely on this budget. Dr. Watkins asked the board to review it and present questions for the next meeting. A final decision will be made in early April.

Dr. Watkins said that we are looking for an 11% increase; she also said that RIDE is guiding our budget and they will say what we can have or what we can not.

Mr. Joe Faria said that Central Falls pays 1% of the revenue and tax payers can not afford more increases and we would be very lucky to get a 7 or 8% increase. He also said that the board should have been notified that the Superintendent was going to the budget hearing.

Mr. Joel Roseman strongly urged board members to look through it and direct questions to Bob or Joanne Vecchio. Dr. Watkins invited Mr. Roseman to join Bob Murray and he replied that it would be difficult in the next two weeks.

Mr. Canavan asked about meetings with the City Council. Dr. Watkins said she thinks the Board should meet with the Council as an act of good faith.

Mr. Canavan said that he thinks there will be areas that the Board will question so look through it carefully.

I. District Calendar: Dr. Watkins said that the Union and the District are working on it and the calendar will be ready for the next meeting.

X. Executive Session:

At 8:15 p.m. a motion was made by Mr. Roseman to move to Executive Session. The motion was seconded by Ms. Ana Cano-Morales. A roll call vote was taken and so it was unanimously approved.

Mr. Canavan reconvened the public meeting at 8:20 p.m. and said that they could not have an executive session because there was an error in the agenda.

Dr. Watkins said that the technology department will be relocating to the basement at Ella Risk School.

Mr. Joel Roseman said that at the next meeting we should talk about the issue of space at the high school and review the Administrator's policy.

Attorney Piccirilli said that he will meet with the Union for Ground Rules on March 20, 2006. Mr. Dick Currier replied by saying that they cancelled the meeting for March 20 and moved it to March 27.

Mr. Joel Roseman mentioned about Alexandra, a high school graduate, who met with the President's wife in Washington. He said that this is the kind of graduates that we need.

XI. Adjournment:

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. Gus Silva and seconded by Mr. Joel Roseman. The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.