

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

May 9, 2006

I. Call to Order:

The Central Falls School District Board of Trustees Meeting was called to order at 7:10 p.m. by Chairperson, Mr. Robert Canavan.

Present were: Mr. Robert Canavan, Chairperson

Ms. Ana-Cano Morales

Ms. Ana Cecilia Rosado

Ms. Mary Lou Perez

Mr. Joel Roseman

Mr. Jhomphy Ventura

Mr. Angelo García

II. Public Comments:

Ms. Michelle Hurley, K-ESL teacher at Cowden Street for 5 years said that she was surprised by the decision of the committee about Cowden being an annex to the High School. She went on to say that

the teachers at Cowden were not included in this process. Cowden Street is considered a high performing school. She also said that Cowden Street has 8 classes not 7 and they have become a close family. Rosa Morel has helped to establish a PTO. The playground was built through a Champlin Foundation grant. The books were donated through Nancy Lindsey's Fund. Cowden Street wants to continue to be a high performing school. She requested the committee to reconsider the plan.

Mr. Canavan said that whatever decision is made would be in the best interest of the children.

Ms. Deborah Zahowski, teacher at Cowden Street said that in Cowden Street all the classes are full. She begged the Board to hold off on the vote.

Roberta Emery, teacher at Captain Hunt was there to support what Michelle Hurley said. Ms. Emery spoke about the fact that Cowden Street School is a high performing school and moving students from one place to another may affect the continuity of the program.

She also said that teachers at Cowden were not given the same advantages as the teachers of Ella Risk and Veterans. Cowden Street School teachers were not invited to any meetings. They were not given the same courtesy and respect as was given to other teachers. They are disappointed because of the way they were treated. She

asked the board to consider this situation.

Ms. Gloria Ciesynski, teacher at Ella Risk said that she found out through the news. The teachers were not part of the process. Parents were notified and there were many parents at the meeting. Teachers, however, need to be respected as professionals.

Ms. Jane Sessums, President of the Central Fall Teachers' Union spoke on behalf of the teachers and expressed her concerns with the leadership in the district and the lack of resolution to problems identified by Central Falls teachers this school year. The moral among the teachers is the lowest it has been in years. Teachers do not feel their effort is appreciated and do not feel supported by district administration. Some of the topics she mentioned were the lack of leadership, planning, supplies and materials, communication, safety/discipline and staffing. She provided the Chairman of the Board with a petition signed by just over 90% of the Central Falls Teachers' Union.

Ms. Liz Legault, principal at Calcutt Middle school said that Calcutt is 32% overcrowded. Some teachers do not have adequate place. Attendance rate is good, suspension rate increased, staff attendance is poor. Middle School needs help. If additional space is not found for them, then they need more staff. She asked the Superintendent and Board for help.

Mayor Charles Moreau said that he was at the meeting to support the teachers and save the children.

Mr. Canavan asked the Mayor if he would want to meet with parents about a bond issue. The Mayor answered “yes”. They are asking for \$1 million from the city and the city can not afford it. Mr. Canavan said that sooner or later something has to be done.

Mr. Bobby Marchand said that enough is enough and asked not to take Cowden away because it is the only high performing school in the district.

Mr. Canavan thanked everyone for their input and said that it is was nice to see how much they care for children.

III. Approval of Minutes:

Mr. Joel Roseman motioned to approve the minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Ms. Mary Lou Pérez and unanimously approved by the Board.

III. Schedule of Bills:

Mr. Joel Roseman asked about the dates of the invoices, he asked if the invoice has the date they receive it or the date it was done,

because some of them show 2005 and others December 2006. He also asked if we are behind in cash flow.

Mr. Bob Murray answered that the invoices are processed as we receive them, it could be a technical error. Mr. Murray also said that we are not behind in cash flow. Mr. Joel Roseman asked him to take a closer look before submitting them.

Mr. Joel Roseman motioned to approve the schedule of bills. The motion was seconded by Ms. Mary Lou Pérez and unanimously approved by the Board.

IV. Communication:

Leave of Absence: Claudine Osko-Grade 6 teacher, Calcutt Middle School-Leave of absence for the remainder of the 2005-2006 academic year.

Geneva Urquhart-English Teacher at Central Falls High School-Request to continue a leave of absence for the 2006-2007 academic year.

Resignations: Kristin Hlady-ESL Teacher, Calcutt Middle School, currently on leave of absence has resigned from her position.

Nancy Craven-English Teacher at Central Falls High School has

informed the district that she will not return from her leave of absence.

Retirement: Joan Pinto- Grade 3 Teacher at Feinstein School (22 years of service)

Gail Hermiz-Title I Teacher at Veterans Memorial School (32 years of service)

V. Reports:

A. Administration:

Dr. Watkins reported that on May 1, 2006 we submitted to RIDE the Diploma System binder which included 5 components and thanked the team who completed this report. She also said that we still have NEASC accreditation with probationary status.

B. Chairperson:

Mr. Canavan mentioned that he received correspondence from the Jamestown School Committee and we need to adopt a resolution in regards to State Special Education Law vs. Federal Law. The Chairman suggested having this item at the next board of trustees meeting.

C. Other:

Mr. Joel Roseman mentioned that the Grievance Committee would like to know if the longevity grievance was resolved. Ms. Jane Sessums said that there are still issues that need clarification.

Attorney Piccirilli said that this is an issue that can be discussed in Executive Session.

Ms. Mary Lou Pérez said that she has not received any correspondence for the board vacancies which closes May 24, 2006. She will give an update in June's meeting.

VI. Personnel Matters:

a. Leave of Absence: Claudine Osko-Grade 6 teacher, Calcutt Middle School-Leave of absence for the remainder of the 2005-2006 academic year.

A motion to approve was made by Ms. Ana Cecilia Rosado seconded by Mr. Angelo García.

Geneva Urquhart-English Teacher at Central Falls High School-Request to continue a leave of absence for the 2006-2007 academic year.

b. Resignations: Kristin Hlady-ESL Teacher, Calcutt Middle School, currently on leave of absence has resigned from her position.

Nancy Craven-English Teacher at Central Falls High School has informed the district that she will not return from her leave of absence.

A motion to approve was made by Ms. Mary Lou Pérez seconded by Mr. Joel Roseman.

Retirement: Joan Pinto- Grade 3 Teacher at Feinstein School (22 years of service)

Gail Hermiz-Title I Teacher at Veterans Memorial School (32 years of service)

A motion to approve was made by Ms. Mary Lou Pérez seconded by Mr. Angelo García

VII. Appointments:

Dr. Watkins recommended that the following appointments be made:

Elba Montes- Lunch Aide- Cowden Street School- Effective April 24, 2006

VIII. Approval of Appointments:

Ms. Mary Lou Pérez motioned to approve. The motion was seconded by Mr. Joel Roseman and unanimously approved by the Board.

IX. New Business:

a. Compensatory Services in the Absence of Service Provider

Dr. Watkins informed the board that the office of Civil Rights requires that the school district implement a compensatory services policy in the absence of a service provider. She also mentioned that in the March meeting she had provided the board with a draft copy of the policy and that the Attorney had reviewed the final version. She requested the board to approve it.

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

b. Central Falls School District Field Trip Procedure: Dr. Watkins said that the School District has a policy on field trips but not a procedure.

Mr. Joel Roseman and Ms. Mary Lou Pérez said that they were confused because the front page reads three but in parenthesis it is 6. Mr. Joel Roseman suggested writing the date it is approved on the

request form. The board suggested tabling it for next meeting.

b. Central Falls School district Budget FY 2006-2007: Dr. Watkins stated the District submitted the budget to RIDE, and they have revised downward our budget request. After the legislature makes a decision on our final budget, we will have to revise our budget recommendations to the Board at a future date. Dr. Watkins introduced Ms. Carolyn Dias, Director of Finance at RIDE, to present her recommendation on the budget.

Ms. Carolyn Dias from RIDE thanked the board for inviting her to the meeting. She stated that the District has a much better handle on finances this year as compared to last year at this time. The District is sending monthly reports to RIDE on its financial status. She presented an overview of the budget for the Central Falls School district. The School District submitted a request for a 10.2% increase but RIDE reduced it to 7.9% for the increase in state general aid. She added remarks to the submission that alerts the governor's office of the possibility that additional funding may be required to support additional teachers after the High School completes their scheduling. RIDE has submitted their recommendation and analysis to the Governor's office. She stated that the City of Central Falls has advised that they cannot make a local contribution because of the financial problems facing the City.

Ms. Dias asked the Board of Trustees to advocate for support for this

budget request with Senators and Representatives; RIDE has done their best in advocating for this budget, but it is far from making it happen.

Mr. Canavan thanked Ms. Dias on behalf of the Board of Trustees

c. High School Facility: Dr. Watkins said that she supports the use of Cowden Street as a satellite for the high school. Mr. Joel Roseman said that it is too premature to make a motion because it is a concept and we do not have a plan yet. A detailed plan with timeline is needed and we will accomplish it, step by step. It is going to impact somebody.

Mr. Jhomphy Ventura echoed what Mr. Joel Roseman said. He suggested having another meeting to make a decision and wants to see input from teachers and faculty.

Mr. Angelo García invited everybody to be part of the solution. We need your help and guidance.

Mr. Canavan said that Cowden teachers' presentation moved him to stop and listen. He said that he does not know how it will impact the schedule.

Dr. Todd Flaherty, from RIDE said that he has to advocate for all the districts and the commissioner has worked very hard for Central

Falls. He said that there is no money in the budget for space and somehow we need every dime to run the district. We have a proposal for a program no matter how you name it; we need to target the children. He also said that if we continue in the same situation next year at the High School, we will lose the accreditation. .

Mr. Joel Roseman thanked Dr. Flaherty for the work he has done for the school district.

Dr. Watkins said that since September we were trying to find a facility inside or outside the district.

Mr. Canavan inquired about the Charter School. Dr. Watkins replied by saying that we can move but we do not have the money to lease it.

Mr. Angelo García said the Charter School is renovating the building. He suggested meeting to discuss this issue. Ms. Mary Lou Pérez suggested having two members from each school to attend this meeting.

A meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, May 16, 2006 at 6:00 to make a decision and develop a plan about the high school facility.

A motion to table was made by Ms. Ana Cecilia Rosado seconded by Mr. Angelo García.

d. Correspondence to the Board Members

Ms. Ana Cano-Morales and Mr. Angelo García requested that any correspondence for them be sent to the Central Office not to their homes and Central Office will mail it to them.

X. Executive Session:

At 8:58 p.m. a motion was made by Mr. Canavan to move to Executive Session. The motion was seconded by Mr. Joel Roseman. A roll call vote was taken and so it was unanimously approved.

Mr. Canavan reconvened the public meeting at 9:50 p.m. The motion to reconvene the public meeting was made by Ms. Ana Cecilia Rosado seconded by Ms. Mary Lou Pérez. A roll call vote was taken so it was unanimously approved.

Mary Lou Pérez made a motion to seal executive session minutes at 9:50 p.m. seconded by Ms. Anna Cano-Morales, and so it was voted 7-0

XI. Adjournment:

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. Joel Roseman and seconded by Mr. Angelo García. The meeting was adjourned at 9:55 p.m.