

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

November 13, 2007

I. Call to Order:

Chairperson, Mrs. Anna Cano-Morales called the Central Falls School District Board of Trustees Meeting to order at 6:08 p.m.

Present were: Ms. Anna Cano Morales

Ms. Mary Lou Perez, clerk

Ms. Ana Cecilia Rosado

Ms. Sonia Rodrigues

Mr. David Cruise

II. Recognition:

a. Ms. Cano-Morales had a special recognition for the team who worked together to garner support for the Safe Walk to Schools Grant. Through the efforts of this team, Central Falls schools secured \$386,000 for the benefit of this community. The following people received a certificate of appreciation for their diligent work:

- **Mario Papitto: Coordinator of Grants, Outreach Service, Title 1, for overseeing, coordinating, and submitting the grant.**
- **Mr. Richard Currier: School District Maintenance Supervisor and Chair of the CF School District Safety Committee for organizing and for bringing together the members of the SRTS team as well as for coordinating this effort.**
- **Mr. Joseph Nield and Mr. Art Hanson: From the City Public Works and Planning Departments, respectively, for their contribution and work in mapping the safe routes to school and for analyzing the infrastructural needs.**
- **Police Chief Joseph Moran and Detective Drew Delicio: Central Falls Police Department for their contribution to the development of the enforcement component of this initiative.**
- **Mr. Dan Davis, Principal at Ella Risk and Ms. Ann Lynch, Principal at Veterans Memorial, for their work and contribution to the initiative.**
- **Mrs. Lucille Daignault, S.C.O.P.E Secretary, for her work in photographing the streets designated as safe routes to school.**
- **The staff from Channel One-Ralph J. Holden Community Center for designing the educational component.**

b. Another recognition the Board brought to light was the successful intervention of teams of people at the high school that brought about the official removal of probationary status of the High School in the areas of Mission and Expectations for Student Learning and Leadership and Organization.

III. Policy and Planning

a. Presentation on Truancy Court – Larry DeCoste

Mr. DeCoste started by introducing, Head of Truancy Courts in RI, Mr. Norman L. Proulx and Magistrate Angela Paulhus to the Board. They did a presentation regarding court here in Central Falls and also about courts in general. The Truancy Courts in RI started in 1999 at Hope High School by Mr. Harry Potter, Principal at that time. The problem at Hope School was to address the Truancy in a timely fashion as suppose to sending children to the Family Court in Providence. They had discussions on having the truancy court in the school so the children will be out of the classroom, attend the court at the school and after, they could go back to their class as suppose to go to a court in Providence and wait for a Judge to see them. Mr. Proulx also mentioned that they now have five magistrates covering the state. At the end of last year they had about 2,300 students attending this court. They are representing 139 throughout the entire state. The objective of the Truancy Court is to get children in the school, identify why they are not going to school, and try to help them as much as they can. The Truancy Court is a National

recognized program in which Judge Jeremiah travels through out the country. The Truancy Court is asking to support this program; they can not do it by themselves. Magistrate Angela Paulhus talked about Truancy Courts in Central Falls. Ms. Paulhus used to be a prosecutor for nine years. Ms. Paulhus is very passionate with the Truancy program because they measure statistics. Ms. Paulhus also explained that the Truancy program reduces the statistics because when a child is referred to the truancy court, the child has the opportunity to trial on the petition or participate on the program, and at the time of the arraignment they have documented the child's academic record and that they know what grades the child has been getting (c, b, or a's) at the time they enter the process. The Truancy Court also tells the child and parent that the process usually takes a year and that they also measure attendance before the child enters the program versus the attendance of the time they dismiss the petition. Ms. Paulhus said that their goal is to dismiss the truancy petition after a year and to have the child develop an educational work ethic, to attend school more and to get good grades so by the time they dismissed the petition the child is ready to be successful. In the seven years that Ms. Paulhus has been here with this District she has seen consistently a 70% to 80% of the children in the Truancy Court improve their attendance and approximately 60% improved their grades. Ms. Paulhus gave some samples of students that have improved in their grades. She also mentioned that parents are essential in this program.

b. 2nd Reading Attendance Policy:

Ms. Cano-Morales said that she understand from Dr. Gallo that there are many teachers voicing concerns about the attendance police suggested changes. These individuals would prefer that students are punished with the ten point reduction in grade averages rather than introducing Saturday school or social restrictions and that she would like to hear from those in attendance at this meeting regarding this policy. Dr. Andrade mentioned that the Department Chairs voiced concerns of why the attendance policy was changing. On the policy it says that if a student misses 10 days he/she will get a point reduction on their grade. Also, they mentioned to Dr. Andrade, why are they changing the policy now when a lot of time was spent to put this policy together. Dr. Andrade said that students now know that if they miss ten days of school their grade will be reduced by ten points and that they know why it is important to be in their classroom on a regular basis. Ms. Rodrigues asked: Has this has helped the children? Are the children not missing school as much as before?

Dr. Andrade said that currently the Attendance Policy is still in place and gave a report on failures for the first quarter at the high school. Dr. Andrade said that now they have a total of 1042 absences, split between 436 students, 270 students failed two or more classes and 166 students failed one class so students that are failing, are failing multiple classes.

Dr. Andrade does not know where the correlation is on this. Ms. Rodrigues also asked: Does the HS knows if these students who failed classes are because of absences?

Dr. Andrade said that he run the attendance report and at this point the majority of students have been absent five

or more days, so if you would to take a five day mark all of those students whether they are A students, honor students will be suffering the ten point reduction. Since the beginning of the year, Mr. DeCoste has been trying to get students to class in order for them to pass their classes.

c. 2nd Reading Athletic Eligible Policy. Ms. Cano-Morales said that Dr. Gallo informed her

that many coaches are concerned with being able to field a team if academic criteria for play are too high. We are most interested in hearing views on this matter as the Board is fairly adamant about raising the requirements. Certainly no one should be eligible if they are carrying a failing grade in any subject area. Ms. Kathy Luther athletic director at the high school said that this past year she submitted the student's handbook to the Board and they asked to review the policies of academics which were at 60%. 60% is what the Interscholastic League suggests. Ms. Luther spoke to Dr. Andrade and the Guidance office and suggested some ideas of what will possible work to increase the standards and came up with 75%.

Also Coach Jackson spoke during this meeting and shared some concerns that he had regarding the grades that the students have to maintain in order to play sports. Coach Jackson also asked the Board if this policy will be take effect on the other activities that goes on the school such as the chess club, book club, dance club, etc.; he said that if they are going to apply this policy to the sports it should be applied to the rest of the activities at the high school. Question asked was if they need to pass three out of four classes with and

average of 75%. The Board said that they are not ready to make a decision on this. A decision will be made before the second quarter starts.

d. 2nd Reading Health and Wellness Policy. Ms. Cano-Morales said that she believes they are in agreement.

IV. Public Comments:

Mrs. Millie Castro said that her Daughter Vanessa Orozco who attended the Central Falls High School was here last June ready for an IEP; she was told that her daughter was going to go the Homestead because the CF HS had nothing else to offer. Mrs. Castro said that she worked with Jennifer Cooks and nothing was done. Her daughter was sitting home until November 7th when she finally started going to Homestead. Her daughter wanted to go to school but no one placed her anywhere. Ms. Castro said that she is very angry especially today because her daughter was supposed to be picked up from school by the Central Falls School Department and nobody picked her up. Her daughter got stuck in Woonsocket. Ms. Castro said that she is trying to be a full time mom, have a full time job and nothing is being done and does not think that this is fair. Mrs. Castro asked to the Board if they were going to do something to solve this problem.

Ms. Cano-Morales said that the Board can not do anything that they are here to listen and to keep everything on record.

Mrs. Cano-Morales asked Mrs. Castro if she has spoken to Arlene Garrison and Dr. Gallo; Ms. Castro said yes. Ms. Cano-Morales told Mrs. Castro that she has gone through the right channels and that

she is sure that both Mrs. Garrison and Dr. Gallo will help her in everything.

V. Consent Agenda:

a. Approval of minutes:

Mr. David Cruise made a motion to approve the minutes from October 9, 2007 and to seal the executive minutes from October 9, 2007. The motion was seconded by Ms. Sonia Rodrigues and unanimously approved by the Board, 5-0. Ms. Cano-Morales asked for any comments and Mr. Cruise said that when the Chair Person asks if all of the members are in favor to say I and they don't answer is because it means yes. Ms. Cano-Morales said that she will like to hear all of the members to respond whenever she asks. Ms. Sonia Rodrigues made a motion to seal the executive minutes from June 12th, and July 10th.

b. Personnel Appointments:

APPOINTMENTS

Bridget Salisbury – ESL.ELA – Grade 7 & 8 teacher at Calcutt Middle School – Effective October 3, 2007

Robert Anastasi – Elementary Librarian – District Wide – Effective October 15, 2007

Lynn Nunn_ Facilitator of Student Services- Effective December 11, 2007

Joshua Karten- temporary business Teacher HS – October 15, 2007

RETIREMENT:

Georgina Hepburn-Morris submitted her letter for retirement, from her

teaching position at M. I. Robertson School. Her last day of work will be December 21, 2007. Mrs. Morris has been employed by the Central Falls School District for 19 years.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE:

Kristen Bond - Ms. Bond has requested a one year unpaid family leave from her Music Teaching position at the Calcutt Middle School for the 2007/2008 school year.

Ms. Mary Lou Perez made a motion to approve the appointments, retirement and leave of absence. The motion was second by Ms. Ana Cecilia Rosado and unanimously approved by the Board, 5-0.

VI. Action Items:

a. Attendance Policy Vote for the alternative solution versus the deduction of 10 points grade.

Ms. Sonia Rodrigues made a motion to approve the Attendance Policy. The motion was second by Ms. Ana Cecilia Rosado and unanimously approved by the Board, 5-0. Ms. Cano-Morales asked for any comments and Ms. Rosado said that she will like to make a change in a sentence and put it in future tense where it says: student is dropped from the athletic teamit should say: student will be dropped.... also Ms. Rosado asked: should we distinguish between academic trips and fun trips? Ms. Cano-Morales said that it was discussed at an earlier meeting where they said that only trips that are educational for the kids will be approved.

b. Athletic Policy Vote:

Ms. Cano-Morales said that at this point in time she will like to table

this vote until the members of the Board meet again and discuss what the right percentage in grade will be best for students to be able to play any sports.

c. Health and Wellness Policy:

Ms. Mary Lou Perez made a motion to approve the Health and Wellness Policy. The motion was second by Mr. David Cruise and unanimously approved by the Board, 5-0. Ms. Cano-Morales asked for any comments and Ms. Rosado mentioned some grammatically errors and asked Ms. Rodrigues to make the changes (future tense).

VII. Superintendent Report

Dr. Gallo said that due to the time and that they needed to go into executive session by 8:00 p.m. that she will e-mail the Board members with any updates. Dr. Gallo said that tonight they will not be ratifying the Local 94 Council due to typographical error that went out. This will be heard for endorsement before the Board of Regents this Thursday. Also, Dr. Gallo gave some information about the Energy performance that the finance department and she are looking into in terms of promoting with the city for major improvements for the next five years.

VIII. School Board Comments:

Ms. Cano-Morales mentioned that on Wednesday, November 14, 2007 Commissioner Peter McWalters will be touring the District from 11:30 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. and asked if any of the trustees will like to go they will be more than welcome to attend

X. Future Meeting:

Next Board of Trustees meeting will be on December, 11 2007 at 6:00 p.m.

XI. Executive Session and Adjournment of public session:

Executive Session pursuant to Chapter 42-46-5 (a) 1&2 of the Rhode Island General Laws.

(Personnel) (Collective Bargaining) (Grievance) (Litigation). A roll call was taken and the meeting was adjourned at 7:53 p.m.