

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

February 13, 2007

I. Call to Order:

Chairperson, Ms. Anna Cano-Morales, called the Central Falls School District Board of Trustees Meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Present Were: Ms. Anna Cano-Morales, Chairperson

Mr. Angelo García, Vice-Chairperson

Ms. Mary Lou Perez, clerk

Ms. Ana Cecilia Rosado

Ms. Sonia Rodrigues-Carr

Mr. Jhomphy Ventura

Mr. David Cruise.

II. Reports

b. Chairperson

Ms. Cano-Morales started the meeting by moving the bus situation agenda item up. Mrs. Cano-Morales mentioned that we have been in

the spotlight for the past week and a half and even before the bus situation occurred last week. We were spotlighted in the media for other things and wanted to share that with everyone. Mrs. Cano-Morales publicly congratulated Ms. Maureen Azar from Feinstein, as well as teachers, parents and students for leading the district to the NECAP results; she also congratulated Calcutt Middle School for the “Spelling Bee” contest winners, as well as the High School art teacher Ms. Deanna Camputaro for holding the Martin Luther King performance.

a. Administrative Report.

c. Other: None

II. New Business:

a. RFP to examine feasibility in outsourcing school transportation in 2007-2008

The bus situation: Mrs. Cano-Morales said that it came to her knowledge while she was in Los Angeles at a conference. She received a phone call from Ms. Ewa Pytowska at 5:00 a.m. Los Angeles time and Ms. Pytowska told her not to worry but there was an emergency. Ms. Cano-Morales said that it was probably one of the most difficult calls that she has taken as Chairperson of Central Falls District. Ms. Cano-Morales thanked everybody for helping in this difficult situation, which means that our kids come first; she thanked Dr. Holland for helping in this situation from his home in Florida. Ms.

Cano-Morales also mentioned that she received a phone call on Wednesday from a childcare provider and asked her how they can help, they even offered their own transportation to help, and Ms. Cano-Morales referred them to Ms. Pytowska and Mr. Papitto. This particular person shared a story of a four-year-old girl and her father who showed up about fifty minutes late because they had to walk; when they arrived they were frozen. A teacher wrapped the girl up with blankets and gave her warm milk to warm her up, dad had to be put in a cab to go to work and the care provider paid for this. Ms. Cano said that her point in bringing this up was, that no matter if they are going to use C.F. buses or outsource, the children come first.

Dr. Holland wanted to clarify the bus incident of last week when on Tuesday some bus drivers did not show up to work. This is an upsetting situation that he felt needed explanation. Dr. Holland said that Central Falls has a shortage of bus drivers and that there is a shortage within the state as well. Dr. Holland was out of town last week when some city students were left out waiting for school buses.

On that Tuesday several of our union drivers were absent as well as our head bus driver, these absences disrupted our entire bus operation particularly by the time we got the information and we had little time to make adjustments. The situation on Wednesday morning was also pretty much the same, I was in constant contact with our office and I approved the use of commercial coaches for Wednesday so that we can return our operation to normal. My main concern was to take the kids to school. Why did I take this action? I did it because

I needed to buy some time to figure out how to solve the problem. Kids come first and that is why I had asked for commercial coaches. It was an emergency and because of this I had to take emergency action. When we first decided to use commercial buses we notified Registry of Motor Vehicles and the Police Dept. Later we found out that it is illegal to contract commercial buses for transportation of students. Chief Moran said commercial buses can't be used because they aren't properly marked with the flashing lights or stop signs needed to alert motorists that children are in those buses. On Friday we had one commercial bus going to Davis and at that particular time that bus was stopped by Chief Moran and indicated that they cannot deliver students to the school. Those are the facts. At no time did our Central office administrators call this bus interruption a work stoppage. Channel 12 was never told that there was a work stoppage by us like they reported on the news. On Monday we investigated each of the drivers who were out, we have statements and documentation indicating that those absences were legitimate. Finally Dr. Holland said that he is recommending that the Board reconfirm the vote from last June 2006 to see bids for privatizing all bus operations for next year. The Board then will review the bids and most likely will have a special meeting in April and make the decision to outsource or not depending upon the projected cost savings.

Bob Murray mentioned that our major goal is to improve the quality of bus service in an environment of tight fiscal constraint. Mr. Murray made the following points.

Current Environment:

- **Capital funding is not available to purchase buses**
- **Need to reduce cost**
- **RIDE and legislature are advocating consolidation via outsourcing**
- **Many elements of our current bus operations need improvement**
- **We do not have an adequate bus facility**
- **We have some excellent drivers and monitors that include employees and contractors.**

Key Objectives:

- **Develop schedules to deliver student to school on time.**
- **Publish schedule to keep parent informed**
- **Maintain safe environment – both employees and contractors are held to same standard**
- **Responsive customer service to parent questions and complaints via an in-district bus administrator**
- **Obtain professional management of bus operations**
- **Reduce financial risks by shifting worker's compensation and property liability risks to contractor.**
- **Reduce operating cost**
- **Focus administration time and energy on education rather than support functions**

Questions from the Board:

Ms. Rosado asked how many companies in RI or nearby is capable of taking over? Mr. Murray said that he is expecting at least 4 bids but that is an estimate.

Mr. Ventura asked what is going to happen to the drivers. Mr. Murray and Dr. Holland said that one of the things that they offered was to work with the union in terms of a few things (a) The RFP will indicate that our bus drivers are given first preference. (b) Bus drivers have seniority and bumping rights. (c) Utilize some of the drivers and/or monitors to fill other positions within the district (both Dr. Holland and Murray have been meeting with individuals already). Yesterday Dr. Holland had a meeting with the committee regarding a commitment to see whether or not we can hire a number of people who can qualify as teacher's assistants, custodians, or other non-certified positions and advocate for our other employees to be hired by the outsource company if in fact we do outsource.

Ms. Cano-Morales asked who are the four districts that are outsourcing. Mr. Murray did not know the names.

III. Public Comments

Ms. Cano-Morales asked to please keep the comments brief and when she feels that the Board had heard enough, she will stop the public comments.

a. Senator John Tassoni: The packet we received today it says improving bus operation through outsourcing. Mr. Tassoni asked the Board: When did you receive this document? Ms. Cano-Morales said "tonight" Mr. Tassoni said, I am asking because I had a conversation with Dr. Holland and he said that Mr. Murray finished this report today so Mr. Tassoni wondered how that transpired. Ms. Cano-Morales said

that she doesn't see how that is relevant. Ms. Cano-Morales asked Mr. Tassoni: Are you going to be testifying? Mr. Tassoni said that it is relevant because he met with the Superintendent and none of those documents were given to them. It is a slap in the face to myself. I was trying to work with the superintendent, I gave him a number of recommendations, I gave him the name of a young lady at URI so the administration can call her and ask her to come to Central Falls, I did this weeks ago and yesterday when I called this lady the administration did not even bother to call her, so every time I give a suggestion they don't do anything about it. So, Mr. Tassoni said: if you want to outsource you should start by outsourcing some of the administration people.

Other comments were made by the following people giving their support and requesting to keep our bus system, and not outsource. These people were as follows: Connie Dube, Crystal Smith, Mario Valdez, Mike Bedard, and John Burns. The following comments were mentioned: 15 people are doing the work of 55. Some drivers have well over 20 years working for the city, and it all boils down to money.

It has been an ongoing issue for many years. We are all grateful of the school bus drivers. We have watched these kids grow. The bus drivers have been serving the city for a long time and if the school decides to outsource the bus services to a private sector the students will not receive the same type of quality they have been accustomed to.

Attached are the comments from Connie Dube, Mike Bedard, and

Crystal Smith.

Dr. Holland mentioned that he will not be responding to any of the comments made, but wants to give a clarification on how the RFP will be developed. We will bring people with expertise to help with that transition, a question was asked: How much money will it cost to bring these people, Dr. Holland said that it will not cost that much we are not bringing NECAP consultants, we are talking about some people who have experience in transportation and who can possibly volunteer some of their time.

Ms. Cano Morales entertain a motion to reaffirm the vote that was taken on June 7th, 2006. Ms. Ana Cecilia Rosado made a motion to reaffirm the vote. Ms. Sonia Rodrigues-Carr seconded the motion. It was voted 6-1. Opposed by Mr. Garcia.

II. Approval of Minutes:

Mr. David Cruise made a motion to approve the minutes and executive minutes of January 09, 2007, as well as the amended version of the executive minutes of December 12, 2006.

Ms. Rosado seconded the motion and unanimously approved by the board 7-0.

III. Schedule of Bills

Mrs. Cano-Morales started by saying that she had a conversation with Mr. Murray about the schedule of bills before the meeting and she

suggested that it would be a good idea if they can appoint a subcommittee preferably two members of the Board to go over the bills before the meeting. She said that she would hate for the schedule of bills to linger in between Board meeting. Mr. Ventura had a question and Mrs. Cano-Morales said that if it is an individual question he might consider calling Mr. Murray and getting an answer from him, Mr. Ventura agreed with Ms. Cano, so she appointed Mr. Cruise and Mr. Ventura to run the financial subcommittee, and Mr. Murray agreed to met with them any time they have a question with the bills.

Mr. David Cruise made a motion to approve the schedule of bills and Ms. Mary Lou Perez seconded the motion and unanimously approved by the board 7-0.

IV. Communication

None.

V. Personnel Matters

Appointments:

PERSONNEL:

Christopher Cruz has accepted the position of 1:1 teacher assistant at

the high school his appointment date is January 2, 2007

Brenda Whalen was hired to fill the position of health secretary at Calcutt Middle School, she began on January 22, 2007.

Gloria Aponte was hired as a second shift custodian at Calcutt Middle School effective January 17, 2007

Margarita Borges has been hired as a temporary teacher assistant at Ella Risk School effective February 1, 2007

Lisa McCarthy was hired as a teacher assistant for Ella Risk School effective January 16, 2007.

Olga Salazar accepted the teacher assistant position at Calcutt Middle School effective January 18, 2007

Liz Ramirez was hired as a library secretary at Calcutt Middle School effective January 30, 2007.

Melissa Cardillo has been hired to fill the vacant .8 Art Teacher position for the elementary schools. Ms. Cardillo's first day was January 31, 2007.

Jessica Pereira has been hired as a temporary employee for the vacant position at Calcutt Middle School grade 7/8 English. Ms.

Pereira's first day of work was January 17, 2007.

Lawrence Clark has been hired as a temporary employee for the vacant position of Math at Calcutt Middle School. Mr. Clark's first day of work was January 17, 2007.

Letters of Non-Renewal

February 2007

Emergency Certificate

Joshua LaPlante Science High School

Jennifer Martin ESL Math Calcutt

Uncertainty of Funds and Bumping and Emergency Certificate

Alicia Migliori Reading Specialists High School

Danielle Delfarno Waugh Reading Specialists High School

Temporary Employee for a Teacher on a Leave of Absence

Diane Wildenhain SPED K Capt. Hunt

Sandra Choquette Grade 2 Veterans

Joann Knight English High School

Nancy Durst K Ella Risk

Kelly Bryce DPT Calcutt

Sarah Sellers SPED Calcutt

Paula Pinto Grade 6 Calcutt

Dale Dearnley Science/Biology High School

Susana Talbot Social Worker Calcutt

Erin Papa ESL Grade 6 Calcutt

Temporary Employee Hired After the Thirteenth Day of School

Maureen Dolan Math High School

Laurie Bucci SPED High School

Nicholas Hurd Music Itinerant

Nicholas Lefrenier Health Itinerant

Stephanie Zuba K Ella Risk

Serena Swartz Library District

Amy Crookes Job Share Ella Risk

The following questions were asked:

Mr. Garcia asked if non-renewals means pink slips, is that correct or not? Ms. Gaouette said that they do, Ms Gaouette said that what we are asking is that you accept the resolution that we have issued for non-renewal letters. Mr. Garcia also asked: what is the percentage of those people being called back. Ms. Gaouette said: Last year we had four members that we did not recall, but we were able to use them on a sub basis.

Ms. Perez said that Ms. Melissa Cardillo was given a pink slip and then hired as an art teacher, how does that work? Ms. Gaouette said: what happens is that there is a certain criteria in the general law that we have to issue non-renewal letters and in one of the criteria is that for any one who is hired on the thirteen day under our contract what

happens is that the position has to be open to the union members of the job fair. Usually most of our employees are recall by the last day of the school year, which is a great thing.

Ms. Rodrigues-Carr asked regarding emergency certificates. Emergency certification means that the district has sponsored a teacher to teach in an area that the R.I. Department of Education have issues that they almost meet that criteria, so they issue an emergency certification. We have to layoff, because they have to take the course in order to renew the certificate, that is their responsibility and you will see that when we do recall these people they will bring something that shows that they took the course in order to renew the certificate.

VI. Approval of Appointments, Resignations and Non-Renewal

Mr. David Cruise motioned to approve the appointments, resignations and non-renewals.

Mr. Jhomphy Ventura seconded the motion, so it was voted 6-1 with one refusal by Mr. Garcia related to one of the employees.

VII. Reports (continuation)

a. URI-CFHS partnership next steps:

Dr. Holland mentioned that depending on the weather for tomorrow, President Carothers would be meeting with the faculty and students to answer any questions they might have. In case he is unable to come in on Wednesday, we will re-schedule for Thursday. On Thursday, Dr. Holland will have a meeting with the Regents to go over

the proposal. Then we will have a meeting with Commissioner McWalters and President Carothers to present the plan, to discuss what the school will be and hopefully have a full endorsement.

b. Posting and research for new high school principal:

Dr. Holland gave an update on the Superintendent search as well. Dr. Holland said that they had a meeting on Monday and gave the following time table: Semifinalist will take place from 2/10 to 2/28, interview for the semifinalist will be done between 2/27 and 2/28, we expect that on 3/15 we will have recommendations from the search committee and between 3/15 and 3/30 we will schedule a public forum. During that same time frame, the Board, President Carothers and the Superintendent will be conducting the final interviews, which means that by the beginning of April an appointment will be made.

High school principal search: Dr. Holland is in the process of soliciting from teachers and parents to please forward him an e-mail regarding the knowledge/background/experience, interpersonal skills, and leadership qualities they feel are needed in the next principal of Central Falls High School. Dr. Holland mentioned that we would be placing ads immediately after the February vacation. Dr. Holland gave the following timetable: A committee will be established, consisting of 9 members. This committee will be screening the applications to select the semifinalist between 5/01-5/15, recommendations will be made and a public forum will be held on 5/15, and then by early June an appointment will be made

c. NECAP Results

Mrs. Pytowska asked that the presentation for NECAP be held until the March Board of Trustees meeting. She said that she needs more time to do the presentation. She will be doing a PowerPoint presentation to review the numbers. The Board members will receive in their next packet a hard copy of this PowerPoint.

VII. Executive Session and Adjournment:

At 8:09 p.m. a motion was made by Mr. Jhomphy Ventura to move to Executive Session and adjourn the public session. Ms. Ana Cecilia Rosado seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and so it was unanimously approved 7-0.