

Central Falls School District  
Board of Trustees  
Minutes  
6:00 PM

March 10, 2009

**I. Call to Order:**

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

Present were:           Ms. Anna Cano-Morales, Chairwoman  
                              Ms. Sonia Rodrigues, Vice Chairwoman  
                              Ms. Mary Lou Perez, Clerk  
                              Ms. Leslie Estrada (6:30 PM)  
                              Ms. Ana Cecilia Rosado (6:15 PM)  
                              Mr. Vladimir Ibarra (6:12 PM)  
                              Mr. BK Nordan

**II. Pledge:**

Ms. Denise DeBarros led the Board in the Pledge of Alliance.

**III. Policy and Planning:**

*A. Extended School Services – first reading*

There was discussion on the proposed policy. Changes and additions were suggested for more clarity. Dr. Gallo explained that if the district does do more outside of the typical day/afterschool programs, eventually the day becomes longer for the student and the policy is in relation to that scenario. The school day hours are not being changed.

It was stated that the policy does mirror the state policy.

*Action:* Changes and additions suggested for second reading.

*B. Academic Calendar 2009-2010*

Dr. Gallo and Jane Sessums met to discuss and develop an academic calendar for 2009-2010. Under the contract teachers have 185 days, within that there are five professional days. It was presented to the Board as follows:

- Professional Development for teachers would be on August 31 (1 full day teacher present without students).
- Students start on September 1 and end on June 16.
- Parent Conference Week would be held in the second week of November (1 full day teacher present without students)
- Three days will be converted into nine two-hour professional day segments for teachers.

The Board was asked if they would continue to meet the second Tuesday of each month. Ms. Cano-Morales requested that a brief survey go out to the Trustees before confirming.

*Action:* Approved during the consent agenda. Motion to approve made by Ms. Rosado and seconded by Ms. Rodrigues. Approved, 7 to 0

### *C. School Facilities – Newport Collaborative Architects Presentation*

Kristie Gardiner of Newport Collaborative Architects gave a presentation on behalf of their team about their upcoming work with the district in regards to facilities. She gave an overview of the comprehensive educational facilities study that was being conducted in order to develop a master plan for the maintenance, repair and upgrade of Central Falls Schools. She spoke of their partnership with The New England School Development Council (NESDEC), one of the leaders in educational program research and development.

Ms. Gardiner also updated the Board of the Stage I project deadlines. In addition, she informed the Board that their team had begun visiting the buildings and interacting with staff in order to solicit feedback and data. Ms. Gardiner explained that Stage I is problem identification and Stage II is solutions and recommendations. There is no implementation (construction). At the conclusion of this study a report will be given to the Rhode Island Education Department (RIDE) in order to secure approval and funding for emergency scoping issues and the opportunity to proceed to the next stage.

Dr. Gallo commented that funds for the study were secured by a grant from RIDE. She also mentioned the Community Forum in April that would be used to solicit more community feedback.

The Board had questions regarding the process and the type of information that would be in the document. Ms. Gardiner explained that the district would get a complete report but that it would be up to the leadership to prioritize once it came to that stage. Ms. Gardiner reiterated that the document would still contain all the collected information and data.

The first deadline for the report was for April 6. Given that deadline, the Board agreed to hold a special meeting on March 31 so that the Newport Collaborative could present their initial findings. The Trustees remained hopeful that the Mayor and municipality officials would join them in the pursuit of massive funding to support this project.

*Action:* Endorsement of the bid award was given during the consent agenda. Motion to approve made by Ms. Rosado and seconded by Ms. Rodrigues. Approved, 7 to 0

### **V. Public Comment:**

No public comment.

### **VI. Consent Agenda:**

A motion to approve the consent agenda was made by Ms. Rosado and seconded by Ms. Rodrigues. The Board approved the consent agenda, with amendments to the minutes, 7 to 0.

## **VII. Superintendent's Report:**

The Urban Education Task Force has broken up into many subgroups with quite a number of new people joining those subgroups. The work of the Task Force is growing and becoming a richer and realistic opportunity for the district. They will be making strong recommendations to the Governor as a result. Several people in the district have been asked to serve on subcommittees.

The Square Mile Coalition is solidifying itself as a cornerstone entity for all of the work that is going on in Central Falls. Christine Gingerella held brainstorming sessions with members of the Coalition group in order to help her to write numerous grants. A number of substantial grants are awaiting a response.

Two new classrooms were open due to returning special education students. One of the classes is a high school class and the other is an elementary class serving grades 3-5. One is housed at Robertson and one is in a beautifully renovated room in the basement of Ella Risk. Both opened successfully and we are hopeful that this type of an expansion continues to influence positively the educational and emotional lives of the children.

The district will host a visit from the Grant Makers Council of Rhode Island in May. They specifically were interested in visiting Captain Hunt and The Learning Community Charter in order to note firsthand the development of the safety net partnership. The visit will also highlight the Nurtured Heart Program at Captain Hunt.

TALL University hosted an artist open session at the administration building on Friday. Thirty varied artists attended the session. Dr. Gallo and the artists had a candid conversation about the various skills that they have brought to the students using their art forms to teach science, mathematics and poetry and how they can continue to expand those resources. Through Elizabeth Keiser's work and with the help of Erminio Pinque founder of Big Nazo, Central Falls students were able to see a performance at the Providence Performing Arts Center. Additionally, during that performance the students had the opportunity to go on stage. Students also attended a Biz Nazo performance at the Rhode Island School of Design and performed with the Big Nazo puppets. The Everett Dance, who was recently nationally recognized for their work of science through the arts, is a full partner of TALL University. They have offered nine shows dealing with Science thus far in Central Falls and have fully engaged the students in K-12. Dr. Gallo invited Ms. Keiser to present pictures to the Board on the many events that have been held.

## **VIII. Next Board Meeting:**

Special Board meet will be held on Tuesday, March 31, 2009

Next regular Board meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 7, 2009

## **IX. School Board Comment/Communication:**

Ms. Perez commented that she was able to go on a Learning Stride at Calcutt Too. She expressed some concerns about the classrooms in the lower level of the building, specifically the level of noise. She asked if the facility study was going to be looking at that issue.

Dr. Gallo commented that the facility study would be looking at that issue. She also stated that they were waiting for ceiling soundboards to help with the noise. She spoke about the Technology Lab that is there now. She also commented on the Thinking Readers pilot program, software that helps make literature more accommodating to different kinds of readers, which is being used with the students.

Ms. Perez commented that she enjoyed the walk overall.

Ms. Cano-Morales stated that the Learning Walks are a good way for the Board to get a classroom experience and to ask questions.

Ms. Perez attended the girls' basketball game and said that she was thrilled with the amount of support they had there. They were going on to play at the University of Rhode Island that weekend. Ms. Estrada reminded everyone that the boys' basketball game was tonight.

Ms. Rosado commented that the day of the Educational Summit she stayed to watch one of the TALL University performances and stated that it was fabulous.

Ms. Rodrigues commented on President Obama's speech on education that had been made earlier in the day. She recommended that everyone listen to it or read the article. She commented that the speech was given in front of the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

Ms. Cano-Morales spoke with Representative Gus Silva who was prepared to meet with Ms. Perez, Ms. Estrada and Ms. Rodrigues, who are all Central Falls residents, to discuss education.

#### **X. Executive Session and Adjournment of public session:**

Ms. Cano-Morales asked for a motion to go into executive session pursuant to 42-46-5(a)(1), 42-46-5(a)(2), 42-46-5(a)(9) for hearing on employee grievances and termination hearing. Ms. Perez motioned to executive session and Ms. Estrada seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and was unanimous, 7 to 0.

Ms. Cano-Morales noted for the public that the Trustees would reconvene in public session only for the vote on the issue before them. The executive session began at 7:32 PM.

At 9:10 PM, the Trustees returned to public session and reported that the Superintendent's decision was sustained.