

Central Falls School District
Board of Trustees
Minutes
5:30 PM

July 20, 2009

I. Call to Order:

Chairperson, Ms. Anna Cano-Morales called the Central Falls School District Board of Trustees Meeting to order at 5:35 PM.

Present were: Ms. Anna Cano-Morales, Chairwoman
Ms. Sonia Rodrigues, Vice Chairwoman
Ms. Mary Lou Perez, Clerk
Ms. Leslie Estrada (5:45 PM)
Mr. Vladimir Ibarra (6:00 PM)

Not Present: Ms. Ana Cecilia Rosado
Mr. BK Nordan

II. Pledge:

Pledge of Alliance

III. Recognition:

Dr. Gallo informed the Board that the Colombian Consulate had sent a thank you letter for the district's involvement with the preparations for the President's visit to the high school. Ms. Cano-Morales added that she had received positive feedback regarding the children's folkloric dance group's performance. She noted that the children were from Central Falls, Pawtucket and Providence.

The Girl's Fast Pitch team was awarded the RIIL Sportsmanship Award. The Board noted that it was a very special award that validated that the student athletes in Central Falls are top-notch.

The Leadership Rhode Island (LRI) alumni, who helped seniors with their oral presentation skills for a period of 10 weeks, were recognized for their work with the students. The program will continue in the 2009-2010 academic year and the group is hoping to have more LRI alumni to volunteer in order to expand the program.

The Board asked that both be recognized again in September when more people were in attendance.

IV. Policy and Planning:

A. Nurtured Heart Approach Policy – Second Reading

The changes and suggestions that the Board had requested were made to the policy.

Ms. Cano-Morales informed the Board that she was told of a Nurtured Parent Model Curriculum, which required purchasing for the training, curriculum and evaluation tool. She was interested in finding out if it was similar to the Nurtured Heart Approach.

Dr. Gallo stated that the Nurtured Heart Approach did not require any purchasing.

Ms. Cano-Morales agreed to send Dr. Gallo and Sarah Rodriguez some information on the curriculum.

The policy was discussed briefly.

Action: Motion to approve was made by Ms. Perez and seconded by Ms. Rodrigues. Approved, 5 to 0

B. Safety Net Literacy Policy – Second Reading

Dr. Gallo informed the Board that she incorporated their changes into the policy and made some additional changes that she felt better clarified the information. The Board reviewed the changes and agreed that the revised version gave them more contextual information.

Action: Motion to approve the revised version that was given at the meeting was made by Ms. Perez and seconded by Ms. Estrada. Approved, 5 to 0

D. Adequacy Suit Presentation

Attorney Stephen Robinson spoke to the Board regarding a campaign to promote Rhode Island's Public Schools, specifically an adequately funded education. He wanted to address them to inform them of the campaign and also to let them know his involvement with it.

Education is the civil rights issue of the 21st century. It is the key to our children's ability to be full citizens in our democracy and to pursue the American Dream.

Many children in Rhode Island do not receive an adequate public education, as measured by the standards issued by the Rhode Island Department of Education and in comparison to our peer states in New England. The problem appears to be especially acute among populations who are in greatest need, such as children in poverty and English language learners.

There are a number of factors that contribute to a lack of adequate public education in Rhode Island which need to be addressed in a number of ways. One important factor is the lack of adequate State funding. Rhode Island is the only state in the country that lacks a funding formula, and the Rhode Island General Assembly has commissioned several studies and written several reports describing the funding needs of Rhode Island's school children and the failure to meet those needs.

Article XII, Section 1 of Rhode Island Constitution declares that "...it shall be the duty of the general assembly to promote public schools..." It is our belief that the General Assembly has not met its Constitutional duty because it has not provided adequate resources and support to provide all school children in Rhode Island with public education that meets the State's standards.

Fifteen years ago, the cities of Pawtucket, Woonsocket and West Warwick brought a court case to establish the General Assembly's Constitutional duty. The case was dismissed by the Rhode Island Supreme Court in 1995.

In the years that have followed, the problems identified in the earlier case have in many ways grown worse. Also, since that time, there have been significant changes both the law and in our

understanding of the role of our public schools. As a result, several cities and other groups have expressed interest in forming a coalition to campaign for the General Assembly to fulfill its duty to promote public schools for all Rhode Island children. The coalition will consist of school districts, municipalities, public interest groups and others. The campaign will advocate in many for a; however, the focus will be a lawsuit which likely will be filed this fall. The focus of the lawsuit will be on the needs of children. While it is clear that inadequate state funding is a major factor in the gaps in Rhode Island's public schools, the campaign will consider a broad array of issues that hold back our children's education.

The coalition will be funded by contributions from members, especially school districts and/or municipal governments. There also will be coalition members who do not provide financial support, but contribute ideas and moral support. The coalition will have a steering committee that will make managerial decisions concerning the elements of the campaign.

After Mr. Robinson's presentation he requested that the Board endorse the campaign.

Action: Board will review request for endorsement.

D. Evaluation of Superintendent

Postponed the public session and were going to discuss in executive session.

Action: Postponed public session.

V. Public Comment:

No public comment.

VI. Consent Agenda:

Consent agenda included the Board minutes from the June 15, 2009 meeting. It also included the following appointments.

Appointments

Berkis Rodriguez – Bilingual Teacher Grade 1 – Veterans Memorial Elementary School
Kim Centazzo – Special Education Self-contained – Central Falls High School
Fabian Sanchez – Science/ Chemistry – Central Falls High School
Clair Johnson – Math – Central Falls High School
Katie Gomes – Special Education Severe/Profound – Central Falls High School

A motion to approve the consent agenda was made by Ms. Perez and seconded by Ms. Estrada. The Board approved the consent agenda, 5 to 0.

VII. Superintendent's Report:

The summer programs, Read, Talk and Play, COOL and PEACE, have a large number of students in attendance. Peer teachers from the University of Rhode Island and students from the Central Falls High School, who attended training, are assisting in all the programs.

Dr. Gallo stated, "Jane Sessums and I have reached an agreement regarding the 2009 Job Fair and we are now engaging in a long-term solution that will meet the Commissioner's orders for future years. The Commissioner has given us a new deadline of December 1 and Jane and I actually have been

struggling to get a time when Jane and her union leadership could meet but we set the date for August 19 for 4:30 PM. It will be the first meeting since the July 9 meeting.”

The district is currently in compliance with the Commissioner’s order because the Commissioner accepted a compromise effort.

Dr. Gallo informed the Board that the Mayor had been to Washington D.C. seeking funding for education. She had been at City Hall that morning and met with Gene Noury, Joseph Nield, Todd Olbrych and Mike Mesolella to fine tune the \$2M renovation bond for school building repairs.

The Board noted that there was new lighting in the high school. Dr. Gallo explained that it had not been in conjunction with the City but with National Grid. It has gone so well that although the program is stopping they will continue to work with the district because we were part of the program early enough and have all the signed documents in place. In two years the bill for the work will be paid for and then the bill will drop significantly.

Segue, a middle school charter, is off the ground. The district will be sharing space in the lower level of Calcutt Too, furnishings, custodial services, physical education teachers, nursing support and professional development. To date the charter has 28 of the district’s registered children as well as another 20 from other charters and or parochial schools that have signed up, and are expecting a total of 60 students.

The Board briefly discussed how the partnership with the charter affects the district. The discussion was regarding how the district has been able to sustain successful partnerships with the charters and that these types of partnerships should be happening all over the state.

Dr. Gallo also informed the Board that the district was partnering with Democracy Prep Charter as well, but that their needs were different. The districts opened its summer programs for two days and allowed Democracy Prep’s Kindergarten teacher applicants to run demonstration lessons and those teachers were evaluated by their hiring board. It allowed the applicants to see what our students are like and it set a good one for our district teachers as well. Jeremy Chiappetta, Head of School for Demo, has been invited to the district’s administrative retreat as well.

Dr. Gallo also mentioned the partnership with The Learning Community charter and how well that has been going. Through the partnership every child attending Captain Hunt [district school] has reached benchmarks in reading this year.

VIII. Next Board Meeting:

Summer schedule - Board meeting will be held on Monday, August 17, 2009 at 5:30 PM.

IX. School Board Comment/Communication:

Ms. Rodrigues brought up the assigning of a board member to the building committee and offered to be on the committee as the Board representative.

X. Executive Session and Adjournment of public session:

Ms. Cano-Morales asked for a motion to go into executive session pursuant to chapter 42-46-5(a)(1) for the superintendent evaluation and pursuant to chapter 42-46-5(a)(2) adequacy suit dand teacher position and assignment agreements. Ms. Estrada motioned to go into executive session and Ms. Perez seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and was unanimous, 5 to 0.

Ms. Cano-Morales noted for the public that the Trustees would not reconvene into public session.