

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

October 13, 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
Mr. BK Nordan (6:01 PM)
Mr. Vladimir Ibarra (6:06)
Ms. Ana Cecilia Rosado

II. Pledge:

Pledge of Alliance

III. Policy and Planning:

A. School Bus Idling Policy – second reading

The Board reviewed the policy and asked for an addition to the title so it would read, “School Buses and Delivery Vehicles Idling Policy.” There was also a minor change to move the section regarding the delivery vehicles to the end of the document.

B. Energy Star Efficiency Purchasing Policy – second reading

The Board reviewed the policy and had a brief discussion.

C. Basic Refrigerant Management Policy – second reading

The Board reviewed the policy and made some minor changes.

Action: Motion to approve with amendments to policy A and C by Ms. Rosado and seconded by Ms. Estrada. Approved, 7 to 0.

D. Data Sharing Agreements Policy – first reading

The policy was not ready for a reading, but Dr. Gallo informed the Board that the district is in the process of working with Family Services and student records therefore the district needs to be vigilant as to how that data is shared with them or any other agency.

Action: None

E. Graduation Policy Addendum and ELL Graduation Requirements Policy – first reading

There was an addendum to the general graduation policy that was reviewed by the Board. The addendum would begin with the 2010 NECAP testing results. Any student scoring a 1 (below proficient) in any assessed area would be required to take an intervention class in that content area in their senior year.

Dr. Gallo stated that if a student did not pass the intervention class they would not graduate and clarified that there are several interventions and supports along the way for all students, but this would be directly tied into NECAP.

Next the Board reviewed the ELL Graduation policy. Ms. Patricia Morris was on hand to answer Board questions and to provide any clarifications that would be needed. Some of the questions and comments were regarding student placement, transcript translations, equivalent courses, ACCESS testing, students with limited schooling, newcomer schools and regionalization of services for ELL students.

After the discussion, it was stated that the policy and procedures seemed to be in the same document so they requested that it be separated.

Action: A second reading with amendments would be held during the Board work session meeting and a third reading would be held in the regular November meeting for a vote.

F. Non-certified Staffing Policy – first reading

G. Non-certified Endorsement of Impact Bargaining – first reading

Action: Not ready for a first reading. No action taken.

H. Resolution Regarding Binding Arbitration

Ms. Cano-Morales stated that the Rhode Island Association of School Committees (RIASC) periodically makes recommendations to school committee members and leaders regarding important legislation, policies that the Regents may be advocating or promoting. These are only alerts of topics of interest. One of the happenings is that the local school committees have been voting to approve resolutions that address a particular piece of legislation that is being considered in the General Assembly regarding binding arbitration. The resolution before the Board mirrors what approximately 20 communities have approved against the proposed legislation that supports binding arbitration. There is much debate at the local and state levels. Many school districts are arguing that it would be a financial burden because an arbitrator could make a final decision that would lock them into decisions that they would have to finance, and given that Rhode Island does not have an equitable funding formula it would create a crisis in their communities.

Ms. Cano-Morales noted that Central Falls would not be as directly impacted because the District is funded by the General Assembly from the state. It is being asked that the district become in solidarity with the rest of the state which already passed such resolutions.

Dr. Gallo informed the Board that while the funding comes from the state the agreement comes from the district so it would affect the agreements upon which the district enters into. The last line of the resolution is that it is forwarded to every City and Town and School Committee, which is how the district knows that the resolutions are being passed because we are in receipt of them as they are approved.

The Board reviewed the resolution. Some of the comments were that the resolution did not seem to mirror the Central Falls School District's situation. It was understood why the message was going out but requested that it be customized to reflect the district more. Also requested were some supplemental information on the bills and legislation to better understand the resolution before approving.

Action: No action taken.

V. Consent Agenda:

Consent agenda included the Board minutes from the September 8, 2009 meeting as well as the minutes from the work session on September 22, 2009. It also included the following personnel matters.

Ms. Cano-Morales noted that Dr. Mario Andrade was on the personnel agenda and acknowledged his work within the District, especially with the high school's URI partnership and wished him well in his new endeavors. She also congratulated Mr. Stan Buckley for his new role.

Appointments

Certified Staff

Eva Silver – Elementary Math Coach, District
Cindy Estrada – Social Worker, District
Marisa Mancini – Librarian, District
Jennifer Sparks – Elementary Special Education

Resignations

Mario Andrade submitted his letter of resignation from the district.

Promotions

Stan Buckley – Principal of Calcutt Middle School

A motion to approve the September regular meeting and work session minutes and the personnel matters was made by Ms. Rodrigues and seconded by Ms. Estrada. Ms. Rosado abstained from voting on the September regular meeting minutes because she was not present. The Board approved the September regular meeting minutes, 6 to 0. Mr. Nordan abstained from voting on the September work session meeting minutes because he was not present. The Board approved the September work session minutes, 6 to 0. The Board approved the personnel matters, 7 to 0.

VI. Public Comment:

Mr. John Burns (non-certified union) commented that the relationship of the district and the non-certified union was severely deteriorated regarding a number of issues the Board would hear about later. Morale was low and the School Board needed to get involved to resolve issues.

VII. Superintendent's Report:

A. Issues with non-certified union

Dr. Gallo informed the Board that there were issues with the non-certified union that would be heard a serious of grievances that were inter-related. She assured the Board that the district was working to

the best of their ability. She stated that there were issues of trust that had arisen and she resolved with Mr. Burns that everything said is in writing because the major element that is part of the grievances was held in a regular session discussion with the president and Mr. Burns and it is a single point of diversion.

B. Commissioners Visit of September 24

Dr. Gallo informed the Board of the Commissioner's visit to the district on September 24. She visited the High School and Veterans to speak with students and teachers. Since Central Falls is a district in corrective action, Ms. Gist made it clear that she intends, with a plan she is putting in place, to make changes in Central Falls. There is no specific information regarding the plan at this time. She did not single out Central Falls. She also spoke about other districts that would need to make changes. The difference being the Central Falls is a district in corrective action so the changes might look different.

C. Commissioner's Review

A group of people from across the state who are active practitioners and teachers at the secondary level and are familiar with high school regulations visited the high school. They spent time reviewing the district work and speaking with people at the high school. The written review is not completed yet but many good verbal comments that were given. They are visiting every high school in the state.

D. Lehigh University

The district was recently visited by 30 administrative practitioners who were on the Lehigh University Educator Tour. Dr. Holland was the leader of the group, which spent three days in Rhode Island. Along with Dr. Gallo and Mike Lauro, Ron DiOrion and Abu Bakr of URI gave presentations to the Lehigh group at Rhode Island College regarding the reform efforts at the high school. Then the next day some members of the group visited Calcutt Middle School, some visited Veterans Elementary School and the entire group visited Central Falls High School. They left with many positive comments and found that what was presented to them was happening.

E. Segue Open House

The open house was well attended by the parents and local educators. Students were excited and articulate. They introduced the speakers and their own goals.

F. Inspiration Consortium

Ms. Sarah Rodriguez and Elizabeth Keiser were among the presenters at the Inspiration Consortium. Ms. Rodriguez presented the Nurtured Heart Approach and Ms. Keiser along with several TALL University students presented their strategies as it relates to reform. They were well received and there were many positive comments.

G. Learning Strides

The first Learning Strides were held in September and the October ones were not for the public only because of the testing during that month. The dates for the upcoming Strides would be sent to the Board.

H. NECAP Testing

The NECAP testing is ongoing. Every principal has done a remarkable job of letting parents and students know how important the tests are and for making them meaningful.

I. Democracy Prep Opening

Dr. Gallo attended the Democracy Prep Opening. Twenty Central Falls Kindergarteners currently attend. Mr. Seth Andrews also shadowed Dr. Gallo on Tuesday and visited all of the elementary schools. There plans for next year is to continue from K to Grade 1 and also expect to recruit 4th graders into 5th. They believe that middle school should begin with grade 5. Currently Segue has 60 of the district's 6th graders and another 60 maybe attending Democracy Prep next year. The Learning Community was also approved for a middle school. The difference with The Learning Community is that they may already have a cohort so it won't impact the district as much.

J. Urban Education Task Force (UETF)

The UETF is coming close to the finalization of the document that will be presented to the Governor. The district was informed that the Governor would like to hear and receive the recommendation document in Central Falls at the end of the month.

K. Drop Out Prevention Summit

Dr. Gallo attended the summit. She commented that over 200 educators and business leaders from the state were in attendance. It was well received and the work continues to be done. Work sessions will be held to further analyze the input received as well as a document with actionable items. America's Promise along with ATT and Kid's Count put together a strong planning team, which Dr. Gallo was able to serve on as well.

VIII. Next Board Meeting:

Board meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 10, 2009 at 6:00 PM.

X. School Board Comment/Communication:

During the Board work session Ms. Perez had stated she would look into the Bylaws to locate the language for the Board members terms. She informed the Board that in Section 2 of the Bylaws it stated that "Board of Regents shall determine the qualifications and terms of office of the members of the Board of Trustees provided however that at least four of the members shall be residents of the city and parents of current or former Central Falls Public School students and the remaining three shall be appointed at large."

Ms. Cano-Morales commented that she would speak with Mr. Keith Olivera of RIDE for further clarifications regarding the language.

Ms. Cano-Morales also commented that many people in the community have questions regarding what is going to happen in Central Falls. She encouraged the Board to engage people. At this time there are no definite answers or details so those questions can be referred to Dr. Gallo. Once there is something more robust to talk about community forums would take place.

The next work session would be on October 27, 2009. The dates are the last Tuesday of the month.

XI. Executive Session and Adjournment of public session:

Ms. Rosado asked for a motion to go into executive session pursuant to chapter 42-46-5(a)(9), that this public body convene in executive session to hear and discuss grievances filed pursuant to a collective bargaining agreement. (8 non-certified Local 1627, Council 94) Ms. Cano-Morales

motioned to go into executive session and Ms. Rodrigues seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and was unanimous, 7to 0.

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