

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

November 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
Mr. Vladimir Ibarra

Not present: Ms. Leslie Estrada
Mr. BK Nordan
Ms. Ana Cecilia Rosado

II. Pledge:

Pledge of Alliance

III. Policy and Planning:

A. ELL Graduation Requirements Policy – third reading

There was no further discussion of the policy.

Action: Motion to approve by Ms. Rodrigues and seconded by Ms. Perez. Approved, 4 to 0.

B. Reform Plan Discussion - continued

Dr. Gallo continued the presentation from the Board's work session that was held on October 27th. Presented were more of the requirements needed to possibly obtain federal i3 funding which is a district opportunity, closely related to the state opportunity for Race-To-The-Top (RTTT) funding as well as other options for reform.

Please see the attached PowerPoint documents which outline the topics that were discussed.

Dr. Gallo informed the Board that another eligibility requirement for RTTT is that a district needs to impact a cohort of about 30,000 children. Although the district does not meet the cohort requirement, the continued dialogue with the state and the Commissioner's strategic plan and public forums regarding the RTTT show that what the district is currently doing and proposing to do are things that match the state's plan of action. Many of the topics presented are still in the planning process.

There was discussion regarding how work was being evaluated. Dr. Gallo gave the example of the scorecard for the Toyota Project. Due to many of the changes at the high school, a Governance Board was created that meets the first Wednesday of every month. During their last meeting, they heard from all four academy leaders as to what was going on, how things were working and what the challenges and barriers were and in what direction they would like to continue. Using a feedback sheet, the Governance Board analyzed all the information that had been given to them and wrote a

response. There were commendations for the things that were going well, but there was also feedback about the things that could be improved. The feedback sheets were shared electronically with the academy leaders and with the high school teachers.

Through the Rhode Island Foundation, the district has received a renewable three year grant. The grant is based on how well the district is fulfilling its obligations. Each year the district goes to the Rhode Island Foundation to give an evaluation report. For the record Ms. Cano-Morales stated, "I recuse myself, I don't vote and I don't participate in the meetings. I am in the building but I am not participating at all."

Dr. Gallo explained that during the first year evaluation they were asked to report on all the things the district was doing, but that this year outside evaluators would be looking at the work. In that process, the three main reforms that were reviewed were the Academic Enhancement Center, the high school liaisons and the TALL program. The evaluators asked Dr. Gallo what the TALL program was about. It was recommended that the evaluators see and experience the program themselves to really understand its impact, which they did. The evaluators also created several focus groups in order to get a better understanding of the district. The evaluators' report will help the district determine how much is known about the work and what else might be needed.

The Board discussed how to increase and improve communication to all constituents as the process of reform moves forward. Focus groups, faculty and employee meetings, public forums and quarterly letters with updates were suggested. The reform issue will also be a standing item on the agenda.

The Commissioner's recent public forum was discussed briefly to let the Board know that feedback was being solicited about what to do with struggling schools. They were encouraged to attend the remaining forums.

The Board requested to get more background information on the reform proposals. Dr. Gallo agreed to share the research with them.

Action: None.

B. Report on Facilities Work

Early last spring the Commissioner approved emergency repairs for \$499,999. Shortly thereafter, work commenced at Hunt and Calcutt, Too that was critical to securing the safety of the buildings. As the work was being done significant issues were uncovered at Captain Hunt and the roof work at Calcutt, Too was accomplished. At around the same time, the Board of Regents was approached with the district's plan that was put together by the Newport Collaborative Architects. They approved \$20,499, 999 in high-priority renovations and additions at the nine facilities.

Sixteen public meetings regarding facilities were held across the district at several schools. There were about four families who attended all of the meetings and became very familiar with the facilities. Those families were asked which schools needed immediate repairs and named Hunt and Calcutt, Too. They also commented that it could not be done without money. They were informed at an early forum about the Commissioner's approval of \$499,999 as well as the interest-free school construction bond that was issued for \$7, 791,847.

The plan that the Regents approved was very specific with the dollar amounts per school and would add up to \$20M. The Board was informed that some issues of concerns were that the current bills for repairs were already at about \$1.2M, although the Mayor reported \$1.7M to the *Times*. Dr. Gallo reported that the district had outgrown Captain Hunt and that the original plan had the expense being for \$5,344.534, which would have provided an addition to the building, which had not happened yet.

Dr. Gallo provided the Board with the most recent report from Mr. Joe DaSilva of RIDE. Mr. DaSilva, who has been working with Central Falls, noted repairs that were not done well at Captain Hunt and for which there were bills. During the last few rain storms leakage was still noted. The work at Calcutt, Too looks nice, but in Mr. DaSilva's report it is noted that the remediation of structural safety issues had not been confirmed. The concern is that there are still students and staff in the building. Meetings continue to occur that are not scheduled as they should be with unilateral agendas from the city opposed to a collaborative one. Many of the questions the district has do not get answered; therefore it was brought to the Board.

Dr. Gallo will continue to attend the meetings but will not sign anything approving the spending of the money when it has not been appropriately vetted nor spent on the list of items that was delivered and agreed to by the Board of Regents. Currently the district contacted and brought in the right engineers to get the boilers at the high school fixed but it is coming from the general fund but should have come from the bond.

More discussion would take place with legal counsel during executive session.

Action: None.

V. Consent Agenda:

Consent agenda included the Board minutes from the October 13, 2009 meeting as well as the minutes from the work session on October 27, 2009. It did not include any personnel matters.

A motion to approve the October regular meeting and work session minutes was made by Ms. Rodrigues and seconded by Mr. Ibarra. The Board approved the consent agenda, 4 to 0.

VI. Superintendent's Report:

A. Data in Your Backyard

The presentation was held at the high school with many community partners and several of the charters in attendance. The information and data will be utilized.

B. Diploma Plus Visit

On November 19 Dr. Gallo was visiting a school in Boston which has a school within a school. Diploma Plus is a nationally recognized organization that opens independent high schools that serve the overage under credited student, but this time created a school within a school. The model is very similar to UCAP.

C. Academy Updates

The updates were given during the reform plan discussion.

C. Flu Clinics

The district had two highly successful flu clinics. The first was on November 4th for the Ella Risk students and was held at Veterans because of how the school lends itself to traffic flow. They served 398 inoculations. Veterans held its clinic on November 9th and served almost 100% of the students. Dr. Gallo gave kudos to administrators, nurses and volunteers as well as to the police and fire for their assistance and input.

VII. Public Comment:

Dustin O'Brien of Aramark spoke on the topic of breakfast in the classroom and shared student letters with the Board.

Angelo Garcia of Segue spoke about the topic of facilities, specifically regarding Calcutt, Too.

VIII. Next Board Meeting:

Work Session meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 24 at 6:00 PM.

Regular Board meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 8, 2009 at 6:00 PM.

X. School Board Comment/Communication:

Ms. Morales acknowledged some educators for the good work they are doing. Michael Paul, English as a Second Language teacher at the high school will be sharing his expertise in Guatemala. In the beginning of October, Deloris Grant and Debbie Fisher traveled to Scotland to present the work they have been doing with their students. There are many amazing people working in the district and they should be celebrated.

XI. Executive Session and Adjournment of public session:

Ms. Perez asked for a motion to recess into executive session pursuant to chapter 42-46-5(a)(2), that this public body convene in executive session to discuss certain matters that are the subject of litigation. A motion was made by Ms. Morales and seconded by Ms. Rodrigues. A roll call vote was taken and was unanimous, 4 to 0.

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