

Central Falls School District Board of Trustees
Meeting Minutes
May 25, 2010
6:00 p.m.
Central Falls High School - Auditorium

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chairperson, Ms. Anna Cano-Morales called the Central Falls School District Board of Trustees Meeting to order at 6:05 PM.

Present were: Ms. Anna Cano-Morales, Chairwoman
Ms. Sonia Rodrigues, Vice Chairwoman
Ms. Mary Lou Perez, Clerk
Ms. Ana Cecilia Rosado
Ms. Leslie Estrada
Mr. Vladimir Ibarra – present at 6:22 PM

Not Present: Mr. B.K. Nordan

II. Pledge

III. Recognition

A video of the Fast Track program was shown to the Board. Ms. Morales stated that the Fast Track was a program that aimed to develop student athletes at an early age. The program, which was created by Central Falls Coaches Ernest Fennell and Nick Palazzo, helps to build character and discipline. It teaches the participating students responsibility and how to be part of a team. The video explained the program in more details and highlighted several of the Central Falls track and field athletes.

IV. Policy and Planning

A. RTTT ongoing discussion - updates

The stakeholders continued to meet and had a chance on several occasions to hear from several candidates for the high school principal position. Administrators for the high school would be named soon.

As per the settlement agreement, teacher screenings would be done and completed by June 14. After those screenings the letters of rescission would be given to the staff.

Mr. Mike Lauro was asked to provide the Board information specific to a public comment that was made in March regarding grants and professional development. His comments were for the October/November 2008 timeframe in which the assertions apparently referenced. The assertion was that an unnamed administrator denied a teacher a science grant opportunity because the students did not possess the cognitive ability required for such a science grant. For the record, Mr. Lauro stated that as of October 2008 and to the present time, it remained unknown who the administrator the teacher referred to was. The only correspondences on

record with reference to the advent of a science grant opportunity, suggest nothing less than an endorsement by the administration for the teacher to pursue the grant. Mr. Lauro provided the Board with the correspondences. He further stated that it was not stated that the students did not possess the cognitive ability required for such a science grant. He provided the Board with a copy of the Biological Science curriculum study "Cornerstone to Capstone Approach."

B. Grant Submissions

Dr. Gallo informed the Board about Nellie Mae's District Level Systems Change Planning grant and the Opportunity Fund grant that the district planned to apply for.

Action: Informational

B. School Board Calendar

The Academic Calendar for 2010-2011 had been voted on and approved in the previous meeting, but the meeting dates for the Board had not been included. The Board was asked to commit to the meeting dates and vote on those dates.

Action: Ms. Rodrigues motioned to approve and Ms. Estrada seconded the motion. Approved 6, 0

V. Consent Agenda

The consent agenda included the May 11, 2010 regular meeting minutes and the following personnel actions:

RETIREMENT:

Sue Venditelli – teacher assistant Central Falls High School submitted her letter of retirement effective June 17, 2010

APPOINTMENTS:

Glorianne Cambio – 1:1 Personal Care Attendant – Robertson School effective May 20, 2010

RESCISSIONS

Evelyn Cosme Jones

The elementary and middle school rescissions were withdrawn. It was clarified that the Board was not reviewing rescissions but rather a resolution regarding the settlement agreement and rescissions.

The May 11 minutes, the personnel actions and the one rescission were approved by Ms. Rosado and seconded by Ms. Estrada 6, 0.

The resolution read:

**CENTRAL FALLS SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES
RESOLUTION**

WHEREAS, on or about January 11, 2010, the Central Falls High School was identified as a “persistently failing school” pursuant to the *Protocols for Interventions: Persistently Failing Schools*, as promulgated by the Rhode Island Department of Education, and therefore was required to select one of four models for intervention;

WHEREAS, the District initially chose the Transformation model that would have permitted all High School teachers to retain their positions, but was unable to reach agreement with the Union regarding the other concessions that would have been necessary to implement said Transformation model;

WHEREAS, the District thus turned to the Turnaround model that required the termination of all High School teachers, with the Board of Trustees voting to accept the Superintendent’s recommendation of said terminations on or about February 23, 2010;

WHEREAS, after extensive discussions between the parties, and also the Department of Education, the parties have arrived at an agreement that allows the District to fully implement the Transformation model (see attached);

WHEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

1. The District hereby accepts the agreement between the parties; and
2. The February 23, 2010 terminations of the High School teachers are to be rescinded in accordance with said agreement, with the exception of any teacher who received a letter for any reason other than transformation or turnaround.

A roll call vote was taken and the resolution was approved 5, 1. Ms. Rosado opposed the resolution and stated for the record why she opposed it.

Fellow trustees,

The Settlement Agreement signed by the Superintendent and the Central Falls Teachers Union contains important gains for the effort to reform and turn around the operations of the high school. We all know what they are: we have been talking about them since February. In addition to these, the district has won other important victories: (one), the union will not file grievances or lawsuits regarding the issues agreed to in the settlement, and (two) the union will withdraw all pending claims of unfair labor practices and lawsuits against us. This is a huge concession. This means that we will no longer have to go through a court battle to continue to serve breakfast in the classroom to the students in our elementary schools.

Despite these gains, my conscience is still telling me to make a statement by voting against the Settlement Agreement. You might wonder why. It is because I don’t wish to reward the ill-mannered, rude behavior of those who resorted to psychological intimidation, to heckling and name-calling, on multiple occasions, those who – like bullies – made fun of a trustee’s mispronunciation of some names, or rejected, excluded or isolated trustees at school events.

It is because I don't wish to reward those who forgot that teachers are models of behavior not only in the classroom, but everywhere and at all times—or those who stood passively and did not distance themselves from the heckling and the name-calling. Call me old-fashioned, but this is something I learned at home, from my school teacher parents. But that was a different time and a different place.

It is because I don't wish to reward those who expect good choices regarding behavior from their students, those who teach students that they are responsible for their behavior, but who – when faced with a difficult situation – made bad choices and behaved shamefully and disgracefully, as their students watched.

VI. Superintendent's Report

A. Graduation Dates

The Central Falls High School graduation is for Friday, June 11 at CCRI in Warwick and the Calcutt Middle School graduation is for June 15 at the Macomber Field.

B. TALL

The Central Falls Parade hosted by TALL University will be held on June 12th. TALL will be attending the June 8th Board meeting in order to give the Trustees and the community a special invitation.

C. Consolidated Resource Plan (CRP) – Title I, II, III

The CRP was given to the Rhode Island Department of Education on May 10th.

VII. Board Comments

Ms. Cano-Morales stated that the District is a tenant of the school buildings but that the state is being proactive by trying to take over the buildings. Money could be saved by doing so.

Dr. Gallo added that Joe DaSilva from RIDE and the gentlemen in charge of the receivership had discussed the reimbursement that was due to the city. Two binders were sent to the Superintendent's office early that day showing the work that had been done. No actual marked signed paid bills from the city came with it. The housing aid form cannot be filled out without that paperwork. Mr. DaSilva suggested a meeting for an extension because they would not be able to make Friday's deadline. They would try to meet with the receivers to balance the approved work.

VIII. Next Board of Trustees Meetings

Board of Trustees meeting: Tuesday, June 8, 2010.

IX. Executive Session

The 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 collective

bargaining and litigation (non-certified negotiations and legal advice) was made by Ms. Rodrigues and seconded by Ms. Estrada.

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