

Central Falls School District Board of Trustees
Meeting Minutes
December 14, 2010
6:00 p.m.
Central Falls High School – Library

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 6:15 PM.

Present: Ms. Anna Cano-Morales, Chairwoman
Ms. Sonia Rodrigues, Vice Chairwoman
Ms. Mary Lou Perez, Clerk
Ms. Ana Cecilia Rosado
Mr. B.K. Nordan

Not Present: Ms. Leslie Estrada (excused)

II. Pledge

III. Recognitions

“Varsity Life: Central Falls soccer tradition” report from turnto10.com was shown. It can be found on www2.turnto10.com/sports/2010/nov/22/2/varsity-life-central-falls-soccer-tradition-ar-299519/.

Central Falls High School Freshman Cristian Estrada recently tied for first place players in the 119th RI Open Chess Annual Championship which is an adult tournament held on November 20, 2010 at the New England Institute of Technology. As one of the youngest players in the tournament, he won three out of four matches which were all against higher rated players. This helped him tie for first place as the top Rhode Islander in the U1900 section. The tournament is called the RI Open because players from the surrounding states are allowed to compete in it.

Fellow Teammate David Hernandez and Estrada are currently ranked as the 3rd and 4th best high school players in the state, and the Central Falls Chess Team currently has four of the top ten rated overall. This past spring, the team scored an overall 4th place out of 76 teams at the High School Chess Nationals in Columbus, Ohio. The Central Falls High School Chess Team hopes to raise enough money again this year to attend the 2011 Chess Nationals in Nashville, Tennessee which will be in April. Coaches Dan Amadio and Frank DelBonis are very proud of the dedication and accomplishments of their players.

IV. Policy & Planning

A. Robertson School update and presentation

Robertson Principal Mr. David Alba updated the Board on the progress that the school, which houses only 5th graders, is doing. He reported that students had been given a voice in governance by starting a student government. Teachers took hold of the idea and helped the students go through the voter registration process. Both students and teachers were involved. A video of the election process was shown.

Student government meets twice a month with guidance and with the counselor. Each room has a suggestion box. The suggestions are reviewed. There are minutes that are taken at every meeting.

The student government elected president, Abner Solano, spoke about what being the school president means to him. His family was in attendance and many of the school's teachers were there as well to support him.

B. Building Committee – approval and discussion

The Building Committee meets every Monday and during their last meeting they voted to pay the bill for Studio JAED for the schematic design. It is the continuing quarter of the design. The committee was still in the process of securing a Commissioning Agent.

Action: A motion to approve the bill was made by Ms. Rosado, seconded by Ms. Rodrigues and approved 5, 0.

C. CF High School Transformation– updates

For the last four months the needs of the students have been reviewed. A need to obtain further student development programs and services to families was identified. In order to sustain those development programs an Executive Director position was discussed with the Board in previous meetings. The position was posted and the recommended candidate was Ms. Patricia Martinez.

Ms. Cano-Morales spoke about Ms. Martinez, who is a former Central Falls High School graduate; she also spoke of Ms. Martinez's professional background in Central Falls which included her work at Progreso Latino.

Action: A motion to accept the recommendation was made by Ms. Rodrigues, seconded by Ms. Rosado and approved 5, 0.

After the vote, Ms. Martinez briefly addressed the Board.

Ms. Jones presented information on the math programs, which is one of three goals identified in the transformation which focuses on instruction, more math time, and useful tools and resources. *Study Island*, the math program that is being used, has skills and lessons that can easily be assigned to students. An added benefit is that the program is also being used in the middle school. Students can complete the work from any computer. After using the program,

a change was made to improve the intervention by removing period rotation. The program also includes NECAP prep. Math incentives were also in place.

The Board wanted to know how much home access students actually have. Student can log on from home but they do not know how many have home computer access but the school is open after hours to students. More adjustments are expected.

Mr. Capellan reported that the committee of teachers, parents, and administrators who reviewed the Behavior Management system had met three times. The group had agreed that the implementation and enforcement of the policies is what was really needed. Students cutting class was an issue so a period by period attendance with detention was implemented. Student attendance and lateness will be targeted in restorative circles to discuss the reasons. A parent handbook to detail policies and procedures needs to be in place. For a small population of students, approximately 20, who have habitual issues the Saturday and PM programs will be an option. Those programs will also be for credit recovery. The committee wanted to continue meeting so they will continue to meet and provide feedback. There were also student assemblies held to discuss behavior and consequences.

Public Comment

Jane Sessums, the CFTU President, presented the Board with a survey that the Union conducted among the high school teachers regarding the transformation. Jane stated that the survey showed that teachers had concerns about the implementation of the transformation plan. Sixty-one percent of the teachers responded. Fifty-one percent felt that the math was successful. Eighty-two percent did not feel that the school culture and climate was successful. Sixty-three percent saw no improvement in resources. Sixty-five percent felt that the leadership was not effective in implementing the plan. Some concerns were also documented in the survey, which included needing more collaboration with teachers and more solicitation of feedback. Teachers do not feel that they can voice their concerns without retaliation. A total of 49 teachers responded to the survey.

Nancy Vasquez, a parent volunteer that greets the students at the Central Falls High School in the morning, stated that her son was being bullied. She stated that she would like to speak with the parents of the other child. She stated that she had gotten some support from the building administrators, but wants an end to the bullying because her son does not want to go to school. Her son wants to be an actor and it is offered at the school but now he wants to go to Davies. This school can give him that success but she wants it to be safe for him. Ms. Vasquez further stated that substitute teachers were an issue. One teacher was absent for a month and the children weren't doing anything. They give the children a drawing that a first grader can do instead of giving them a more advanced way to be involved in art. She stated that she witnessed a teacher giving the students a piece of paper and then the teacher turned her back and started using the computer. We are damaging the future of the kids because they don't want to go to school.

Maria Lozano, a parent and the Central Falls High School PSTO president, stated that she was unhappy with the teacher absences. She spoke about teacher evaluation presentation that was given at one of the Board meetings. She stated that the parent handbook for the high school has not been given to parents.

V. Consent Agenda

A motion to approve the minutes of the previous meeting, with amendments, and the personnel actions was made by Ms. Rosado, seconded by Mr. Nordan, and unanimously approved 5, 0.

VI. Superintendent's Report

A. District Evaluations

Dr. Gallo spoke to Ms. Sessums about the district evaluation committees. A meeting will be upcoming as RIDE sheds more light on the requirements.

B. Reform Update

Dr. Gallo met with Mr. Capellan, Mr. Parisi and Ms. Sessums to review the settlement agreement line by line. The SIG funds were substantially approved. Now the work would focus on moving forward with the CFTU on a contract/compact.

Dr. Gallo commented on the teacher survey that was presented to her and to the Board. She stated that they were only three months into the reform plan. Last year's reading proficiency had climbed to 55% and the goal is for it to continue to improve across the district. There have been investments in student programs and materials such as the Study Island program, classroom libraries that will soon arrive and a \$300,000 investment in wiring and computers. Approval of the transformation plan was secured, \$1M was secured, the high school has three main goals, one full cycle of evaluations was completed, and there is continual professional development.

Student leaders have called for a protest and will walk out of school and have called the media. The Police Chief was alerted so that no arrest would be made if it was a peaceful demonstration.

The majority of the teachers have been shown to be proficient in their craft. Those who were found to be at basic level or not proficient will get supports. The District has asked if a compact, not a contract, can be considered to allow for more public discussion with more teachers at the table.

The district does have a budget gap and should make it to the end of the current year but next year there will be a \$2M deficit. Since we cannot operate in a deficit, cuts will have to be made. We are studying the situation. There is a RIDE meeting scheduled for December 15th to discuss the budget.

VII. Board Comments

Ms. Rosado commented that the teacher survey had not been validated by psychometricians, and that some of its questions did not make sense. For example, the survey found that the graduation rate had not improved, when at four months into the school year, there has not been a graduation. She stated she hopes that more parents will come forward with their concerns. "As a Trustee I am responsible for all the children. Change of this magnitude does not happen overnight we all need to pull together."

Ms. Perez announced that after 11 years of service to the Board of Trustees she would be resigning from her position at the end of the month.

The Board appreciated her service. It was reiterated that Mr. Ibarra's term had expired in November and he opted not to be considered for reappointment. One candidate has been submitted to RIDE for approval, to fill the spot vacated by Mr. Ibarra, and another will have to be submitted for Ms. Perez's spot.

VIII. Next Board of Trustees

The next Board of Trustees meeting will be on Tuesday, January 11, 2011. The meeting scheduled for December 28th was cancelled.

IX. Motion to Recess to Executive Session and Adjournment

No executive session was held. A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Rosado and seconded by Ms. Rodrigues.