

Central Falls School District Board of Trustees  
Meeting Minutes  
March 8, 2011  
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 6:05 PM.

Present: Ms. Anna Cano-Morales, Chairwoman  
Ms. Sonia Rodrigues, Vice Chairwoman  
Ms. Leslie Estrada-Berroa  
Ms. Cheryl Lafond  
Ms. Ana Cecilia Rosado  
Mr. B.K. Nordan  
Ms. Stephanie Gonzalez

**II. Pledge**

**III. Policy & Planning**

*A. Grand Canyon Program and Trip*

Mr. Donald Blais, a teacher from the Central Falls High School, explained why the Grand Canyon trip was important to students and to their learning. He explained that this year the program included a mentoring component that paired participating students with Central Falls High School graduates. Since the mentors are graduates, they are positive role models that can provide support, guidance, and help to the students. Participating students have always been expected to be in school and on time, but this year Mr. Blais is focusing on it more in order to help with the school's attendance goals.

Mr. Blais credited the program to a retired teacher who moved to the Grand Canyon and began experiential education. Since its inception five years ago, approximately 60 Central Falls High School students have participated.

Another component to the program is community service. The students volunteer their time with a variety of charitable organizations. The academic component includes expressive writing that is tied to the Proficiency-Based Graduation Requirements (PBGRs) and will go into the students' portfolio.

The final component of the program is the Grand Canyon trip. The trip includes tours through the park with local guides so the students can learn about human history, wildlife and geology. Twenty-two current and former students are scheduled to go. All chaperones and students are required to be cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) certified and all students will have physicals and have medical insurance.

The Board asked Mr. Blais to return with participating students once they returned from the trip so they could update them on their experience.

*B. Chess Team High School National's trip*

Central Falls High School teacher Mr. Daniel Amadio informed the Board of the upcoming Chess Team Nationals to be held in Nashville, Tennessee from April 29<sup>th</sup> to May 1<sup>st</sup>. The dates for the nationals are not during the school vacation week like last year, but the participating students are in good academic standing. Additionally, all of the high school players scored proficient on the NECAP testing and won the state championship with an undefeated season. Mr. Amadio briefly gave the travel details and stated that High School Teacher Frank DelBonis was the lead on the trip and could be contacted if further information was needed.

*C. Executive Summary: guidance counselor grant, third year approval*

Dr. Gallo informed the Board that the Director of Special Education Edda Carmadello is the overseer of the Elementary and Secondary Schools Counseling Program (ESSCP) grant award. It has been approved for the third and final year. The guidance counselors are now at the elementary, middle and high school levels.

Dr. Gallo read a brief paragraph from the executive summary that surmised the importance of school counseling programs. "Comprehensive school counseling programs use data to determine what specific interventions could be delivered to which individual or groups of students in order to improve behavior, attendance, or academic achievement for all students. Counselors further use these data skills to evaluate the effectiveness of their interventions and activities. The Central Falls school counseling department has developed a data-rich and data-driven program in which school counselors collect data to determine the impact of their program on important student outcomes. The Central Falls school counselors are guided by a *Curriculum Framework for School Counseling* that addresses the programmatic side of the K- 12 school counseling, and an *Administrative Handbook for School Counseling* that addresses the operational requirements for successfully implementing a comprehensive school counseling program. The *Framework* provides guidance on assessing student progress toward counseling standards. The *Handbook* provides assistance on establishing an effective infrastructure to support the implementation of the counseling program, and on establishing a *School Counseling Data Management System* (SCDMS) to gather, interpret and report data on the impact of the counseling program."

Last year, Veterans Elementary School was visited by Senator Jack Reed to see how the guidance counselor program worked within an elementary school setting.

*D. NECAP Presentations: Ella Risk and Veterans Elementary*

Ms. Maureen Azar presented the Ella Risk Elementary School's NECAP data. Last year, for the first time, Ella Risk made Annual Yearly Progress (AYP). Ella Risk was also among the schools listed for making significant gains from 2007 to 2010. (See attached presentation.)

The staff is utilizing the data to assess the areas in which students are struggling. There are initiatives that are working well and will continue and others that need to be strengthened. Some of the initiatives include flexible grouping in reading/math, intervention block

Schedule, ESL supports, progress monitoring with *AimsWeb*, Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), monthly grade level meetings, Response to Intervention (RTI) blocks, and ESL supports.

There is a person who provides writing help to students who were in ESL classrooms at one time but are now in a mainstream classroom. This is provided because based on data the student may still need some level of supports. *AIMSweb*, a benchmark and progress monitoring system based on direct, frequent and continuous student assessment, in partnership with Providence College and Johnson and Wales lab schools. The DRA is conducted in conjunction with The Learning Community Charter School through the Growing Readers Initiative Program. The monthly faculty meetings provide staff with time to discuss students' strengths and needs by grade level.

The release items from the NECAP testing help quantify the areas of instruction that the student needs to improve or may be missing. The goals for 2011-2012 are to analyze and target areas of the curriculum that are not addressing GLEs/Common Core Standards, make sure that the reading, writing and math curricula are implemented systematically in all grades. Ms. Azar explained that the reading, math and writing curricula are currently in place but that there are some gaps in the instruction that have been identified and are being improved. Additionally, the intervention block is new this year and is continuously being monitored and tweaked as necessary.

Ms. Azar stated that the school is moving in right direction and that everyone works together. She acknowledged that there is still a need for more improvement but credited the students and the teachers for the progress that has been made so far.

Ms. Ann Lynch presented the Veterans Memorial Elementary School's NECAP results. (See attached presentation.)

Ms. Lynch informed the Board that some discrepancies for Grades 3 and 4 were found and were being reviewed. She is working with the state on that data. Limited English Proficiency (LEP) students and Individualized Education Plan (IEP) students are still a major concern that needs to be addressed. Additionally, the school has a self-contained strand, which educates students with severe disabilities.

The percentage of students at/above proficient in reading from 2008-2010 is as follows:  
2008 - 44% of the students in grades 3-5 were at or above proficiency in reading.  
2009 - 46% of the students in grades 3-5 were at or above proficiency in reading.  
2010 - 53% of the students in grades 3-5 were at or above proficiency in reading.

Veterans went up 6 points in reading from 2009 to 2010.

The percentage of students at/above proficient in math from 2008-2010 is as follows:  
2008- 33% of the students in grades 3-5 were at or above proficiency in math.  
2009- 41% of the students in grades 3-5 were at or above proficiency in math.  
2010- 41% of the students in grades 3-5 were at or above proficiency in math.

There was no gain in the test scores from 2009 to 2010. It remained the same.

Scores have been improving, especially in reading. Last year flexible reading groups with targeted instruction at the student's level were implemented. Students who were in the low and medium low categories were able to receive the appropriate supports. Currently the school does have more reading interventions than math interventions.

The school will continue with flexible groupings. The School Improvement Team (SIT) literacy and math subcommittees are conducting a more in-depth look at the data in order to develop a more comprehensive plan to improve student achievement. The school is piloting a math intervention block using *AIMSweb* benchmarks and probes, which will be fully implemented in 2011-2012. The school will continue with intervention programs in reading and math. Grades 3 and 4 will begin quarterly DRA reading assessments in 2011-12. The school will continue with The Learning Community Safety Net Protocol. RTI will continue to meet four times a week.

Ms. Lynch noted that as Ms. Azar had previously mentioned that there were instructional gaps that were being identified. They are working closely with the district's consultants to identify and fill the gaps. She noted that the data showed that a large portion of students were just 2 points short of the 3 mark, which is significant.

Interventions can be provided for up to eight weeks or for the whole year depending on student's need. Some students who were previously in RTI were proficient on the testing.

Ella Risk and Veterans are working closely to use the same approaches even though the implementation may be a little different due to scheduling, student need and teacher preferences, they know it is important to have aligned curriculum.

A considerable number of students were new to the country and many of those students entered into the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. This also affected the results. This year there are dual language classrooms but the students in those classes have not taken the test yet because of their age. Next year they will be in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and will take the test. AYP was missed by one subgroup.

The Board requested that a presentation be given about the Kindergarten grades that would include the Pre-Kindergarten pilot program at Progreso Latino.

#### *E. Inappropriate Social Networking policy review – ACLU complaint*

The Dr. Gallo and the Board received a letter from the ACLU with targeted recommendations on their newly approved social media policy. Several suburban districts have the policy that had been vetted through their legal counsel. One of those districts contacted Dr. Gallo to make her aware that they had not had any issues with the policy. Since Central Falls has received the letter it was decided that it would be best to modify the policy. Central Falls District's legal counsel reviewed the policy and made the appropriate revisions. The revisions have been sent to the ACLU.

Dr. Gallo asked the Board hold on approving the revised policy because the ACLU had not yet commented on the revisions. The vote was tabled until the next meeting.

Ms. Rosado did want to make some further recommendations on the language and stated she would send it to Dr. Gallo.

## *F. High School Reform update*

Before beginning his presentation, Mr. Capellan informed the Board that Central Falls High School Track and Field Team were going to Nationals and that the Swim Team had competed in the States for the first time.

Mr. Victor Capellan and Ms. Evelyn Jones presented the attendance data. (See attached.) There is concern regarding student attendance, lateness, and attendance to individual classes. Since the start of the school year, the attendance rate at the High School has remained constant averaging 85%. Approximately 15% of the overall student population is absent on a daily basis. Approximately 20% of the overall student population is tardy on a daily basis.

As of December 2010, teachers take online attendance every period, thus allowing for the collection of data on unexcused class absences (cuts). Students who are the most truant are reported for administrative interventions, while other students who cut are addressed by teams on an individual basis. The preliminary numbers show an impact and reduction in the number of unexcused class absences for the month of January, 2011. There was an increase in the number of unexcused class absences for the month of February. Among the issues affecting the February data were staff absences, missed accounting of dismissals, internships, and field trips, technical glitches in the MMS student information system, and some inaccurate attendance taking by covering teachers or substitutes.

Among the interventions in process or in development are parent communications, restoration room, administrative PM time, social probation, athletic restrictions, root cause analysis of the cutting by student conferencing, community service, contracts, referral to services and alternative programs, Tier 1 teacher/team interventions, and ongoing data analysis for change. Tier 1 teacher team interventions are important and some improvement is needed in this area.

The data showed that most of the tardies happen during the first 10 minutes of school. Thirty-two percent (32%) of students are late within the first 10 minutes of the start of school, an additional 19% are late within 20 minutes of the start of school, 51% of students, then, are late within the first 20 minutes of school. If those students who are late within the first 10 minutes of school arrived on time (32%), the percentage of tardies would decrease from an average of 20% to 14% of the school population. Posters indicating 10 Ways to Save 10 Minutes have been displayed across the school in an effort to increase punctuality within the first 10 minutes of school. Mr. Capellan noted the PM School students have a 90% attendance rate.

The Leadership Team and supports met with Toyota in October and in November, 2010 to discuss how to continue to improve advisories and to create student incentives for attendance.

Some of the ways that the school has been addressing the issues is by continuing to use the call system to inform parents of absences and tardiness as well as personal phone calls, send attendance reports by mail to parents along with their child's report cards and quarterly grades, interventions for students who cut class, school and day restorative circles to address tardiness, and school campaigns that will give students the strategies to get to school on time.

Some of the next steps that will address the issue are to review the attendance policy, work with technology so that parents can access the MMS system online for faster access to their

child's records, more continuous implementation of interventions and services throughout the building and team-based incentives to motivate teams to increase their attendance rates.

The parent greeters have been instrumental in helping with the climate and culture of the school. Over 50 parents attend the last PTSO meeting. Parents are in the building supporting the students and the teaching staff.

The Team Leadership is also researching innovative ways that attendance can be monitored. They have researched attendance card scanners, alarms at the exit doors and collaborations with business owners during the school day.

The beginning of class is crucial. Some classes may not start with rigor in the first 10 or 20 minutes so students do not feel obligated to be on time for those classes. That is being addressed.

Students who are caught cutting class during the school day are sent to in-school suspension room (ISS). There are about a dozen cases in which the resources have been exhausted therefore Dr. Gallo and Mr. Capellan have met to discuss truancy for those severe cases.

The excused and unexcused tardiness needs to be desegregated more in order to get even more detailed data.

Mr. Capellan informed the Board that the Central Falls High School was asked to provide Leadership Rhode Island (LRI) current and former alumni an enhancement activity that would be additional to the groups Education Day. Mr. Capellan, with the assistance of Yaviri Grosso, prepared an activity that would be held on Tuesday, March 15 from 8:30 AM to 11:00 AM. Twenty (20) to 30 LRI participants were expected to participate with at least 60 juniors and seniors in classroom shadowing and brief business meetings.

#### *G. Building committee reports and approval of bills*

Dr. Gallo informed the Board that there is a \$15.5 M legislation for emergency repairs, but City Finance Officer Ellen Eggeman noted that even with support of the legislator and bond that the city could not afford the debt service on the bond. Housing aid will reimburse up to 100% on the bond but not on the interest. Leasing the buildings to the state while under repair and then returned was discussed.

The remaining \$3.3M from the original \$5M bond is being used for repairs. The work must be substantially completed by June 30, 2011 for the reimbursement. The work would occur off hours so that the school day is not interrupted. It is clear in the bid as to what is considered substantially complete.

The bills that were presented to the Board for approval were from Studio JAED (contractor) in the amount of \$6,396.17, ANC (owner's representative) in the amount of \$1660.35 and Stephen Turner (commissioning agent) in the amount of \$1,150.00.

Additionally, Dr. Gallo informed the Board that the roof work that had been done at Calcutt, Too, which now houses Segue, is under investigation. This investigation has to be conducted through the City. Dr. Gallo wrote to Receiver Judge Flanders about it.

A motion to approve the payment of the three bills was made by Ms. Rodrigues, seconded by Ms. Gonzalez, and approved 7, 0.

#### *H. Streamlined Contract discussion*

The discussion was tabled.

### **IV. Public Comment**

Alice Webb, a parent, expressed her desire to have the Central Falls High School graduation take place in Central Falls or at CCRI Lincoln campus rather than at the CCRI Warwick campus. She felt that many people in the community would like this as well. She stated that she had spoken with Chief Moran about the possibility of having the graduation at Macomber Field, Higginson or Jenks Park. She stated that the Chief thought that the best location would be Jenks Park, which he can accommodate. Ms. Webb further stated that she knew that having the graduation at Jenks Park would mean that the weather could be a factor.

### **V. Consent Agenda**

A motion to approve the minutes and personnel actions was made by Ms. Rosado, seconded by Ms. Rodrigues, and approved 7, 0.

### **VI. Superintendent's Report**

#### *A. Budget – UCOA update*

Unified Chart of Accounts (UCOA) helps to understand the budget. District-to-district comparisons can be made. The district went on UCOA and found that the Central Falls School District employees 478 full time staff, 127 part-time staff for a total of 605 employees. The Cranston School District has 2,000 total employees. Cranston's per pupil expenditure for retirees and workman's compensation is \$205 per pupil. Central Falls' per pupil expenditure for retirees and workman's compensation is \$1,606. The workman's compensation premium is exactly the same in Cranston and in Central Falls. These are the types of items that Districts will be able to see and compare.

The Board will have a workshop to go over the budget and to learn how to analyze the data.

#### *B. Rhode Island College Leadership program*

Dr. Gallo read the letter she received from Dr. Tyler Page who is the program coordinator at Rhode Island College (RIC).

“Last fall, Dr. Sidorkin suggested a collaborative effort between RIC and Central Falls involving school leadership. We believe that our nationally-accredited leadership program (LEAD) would be a good fit. We are willing to conduct classes in Central Falls making it more accessible and time-effective for your teachers. One of our recent graduates, Mario Bueno of Progreso Latino, has offered to host the classes at their facilities. The LEAD program has streamlined our M.Ed. program from three years to two. At the same time, we have developed a one-year graduate certificate in teacher leadership. Upon completing the CGS, students could transition directly into the second year of the Masters program. We are

ready to implement both options for CF. We are amenable to creating informational fliers and do on-site visits to explain the potential program to prospective candidates. Classes could start this August. Enclosed, you have templates of the proposed 1-year Teacher-Leader certificate and the 2-year degree plan. Let me know as soon as possible if this in the spirit of Dr. Sidorkin's offer and meets the needs of your teachers and district.”

Dr. Gallo will advertise it across the district and if there is a cohort that is interested then a small reduction in tuition can be made. The letter will be provided to the Union President Jane Sessums.

## **VII. Board Comments**

Ms. Rosado stated that the temperature in the high school library was unacceptable. She stated that something needed to be done and that maybe the meeting needed to be moved to another location with disability accessibility.

## **VIII. Next Board of Trustees**

The next Board of Trustees meeting will be on Tuesday, March 22, 2011.

## **IX. Motion to Recess to Executive Session and Adjournment**

A motion to recess to 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 (certified teacher contract negotiations) was made by was made by Ms. Rosado, seconded by Ms. Rodrigues, and approved 7,0.

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