

Central Falls School District Board of Trustees
Meeting Minutes
May 10, 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 6:00 PM.

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

II. Pledge

III. Recognitions

A. Central Falls Chess Team

Central Falls High School chess team faced their toughest competition at the National High School Chess Championship in a higher category than they have ever experienced. Over 1,300 players from 38 states were represented at the tournament. The National Championship, a three-day long competition which began on April 29, 2011, was held in Nashville, Tennessee. The Central Falls team was broken down into two groups, allowing them to compete in two sections of the championship. The first CFHS team scored a total of 17.5 points, with only a two point difference between them and the winning team in the U1600 Section. The second Central Falls team, competing in the U1200 Section, received 23rd place out of the competing 54 teams in the U1200 Section. CFHS chess team member, Dylan Humphries, proved to be the dark horse of the competition. Entering the championship as the lowest-ranked team member, he beat any predicted figures winning five games, tying one game, and losing one. Out of the 247 players in his competing section, Humphries earned the 11th place spot. In addition, senior student, Tyler Gomes, tied for the 10th place spot out of 95 students in the unrated section. The team came in 6th place at National High School Chess Championship.

B. Central Falls High School Science Olympiad Team

Five Central Falls High School students competed in four events at the 2011 Rhode Island Science Olympiad held at Rhode Island College on Saturday, April 9, 2011. The Central Falls students, Cristina Robalo, David Hernandez, John Davis, Jose Contreras and Lisa DaCosta, make up the first Science Olympiad team at CFHS. The team spent several months preparing for the competition, exploring topics within various science platforms. The five students competed in four different events as teams of two. One team in particular, Cristina Robalo and David Hernandez, took first place in anatomy and physiology. Mr. David Upegui, a Central Falls High School science teacher who joined the students at the competition, expressed his pleasure with the

results and learning opportunities that were afforded to the students because of the event. The Science Olympiad is a national program that was created to increase interest in science. It has members in every state with over 12,000 actively participating K-12 schools. The Science Olympiad aims to teach science by involving students in active, hands-on activities that emphasize problem solving and the scientific process. In state and national competitions, winners of individual events win athletic-style medals, with winning teams earning trophies. At the national level, there are substantial scholarships awarded to top winners.

C. Robertson 5th Graders CPR Certification

Fourteen fifth graders received their CPR certification in child and infant care from the American Red Cross. Another cohort of students will also become certified. This CPR certification opportunity was brought to the Robertson Principal David Alba by Christine Gingerella in a continued effort to provide the students with Extended Learning Opportunities.

D. Letter to the Editor – Shakespeare in C.F.

The Board wanted to recognize David C. Burnham for writing a letter to the editor of the Providence Journal detailing his positive experience at the school with staff and students. The letter can be found at http://cfhstransformation.org/?page_id=38.

Ms. Cano-Morales congratulated Stephanie Gonzalez and Leslie Estrada-Berroa for their involvement in the Earth Day Community Event. Dr. Gallo informed the Board that the schools had an Earth Day the prior Friday.

IV. Policy & Planning

A. Bio Blitz Overnight Field Trip

Teacher Stephanie Racine informed the Board that 12 to 16 Calcutt Middle School students would be going to Josslyn Farm for a Bio Blitz. She and the students who were present were requesting permission for the overnight field trip. Bio Blitz is an intense period of biological surveying in an attempt to record all the living species within a designated area. Groups of scientists, naturalists and volunteers conduct an intensive field study over a short, usually 24 hour period of time.

The Board invited the students to come back to present what they learn.

Action: The trip was endorsed.

B. Tobacco Free School Policy – second reading

There was a brief discussion and some more revisions were requested. Ms. Rosado offered to work with Ms. Grist to vet the policy more. It was agreed that it would be on the agenda for the May 24th meeting.

C. Math Curriculum Presentation K-12

Ms. Pollard explained the programs that were used from K-12. The elementary level uses Investigations. Binders that have problem solving tasks are given to the teachers and then an end of unit assessment is completed. The Exemplars, the field of standards-based performance tasks to improve assessment and instruction, visited the district and filmed teachers and students as they worked on tasks.

The data is used (AMES web probes) to see where the students are so they can be grouped to their needs better and target any missing skills. Investigation has seven units at the Kindergarten level and the other levels have nine. There is Scope and Sequence which has an implementation guide for grade level as well as for the previous grade and the next grade. A pacing guide is used as well. The Common Core standards align.

There was discussion on whether or not a parent guide was available. Parent support was done for families with workshops and will be continuing again next year.

At the middle school level the core program that is used is Connected Mathematics, which is similar to Investigations. The middle school currently has two periods of math but funding may prevent it from happening again next year. Mr. Bianco is working on Scope and Sequence at the middle school level. A copy of a draft was given to the Board.

At the high school level the core program is Problem Solving Tasks. More NECAP practice items are being added for interventions. Expectations of students are being written and the Scope and Sequence is being worked on, since one of the major high school goals is to bolster math.

Calcutt Principal Ms. Tobin stated that it had been a great experience working with Ms. Pollard and Mr. Bianco. The staff is in sync and is truly moving the work forward. Teachers have done a phenomenal job. The students do not see it as having to take two math classes

D. Central Falls High School Update

Mr. Capellan and Ms. Jones gave an update regarding the Central Falls High School.

Summer school is going to be called “Summer of Learning in CF”. They are moving away from traditional summer school in order to focus on the students’ needs. Part of summer school will be credit recovery. Some of the programs will be held at CCRI so that the students can have an experience similar to Upward Bound, Student Bridge, etc. Evening programs will also be offered. Enrichment opportunities such as seminars will give teachers and students a forum to discuss and explore various topics. There will be an intervention strand in which students who have specific needs can also benefit. NECAP prep in English Language arts and math will also be offered. Additionally, they will have an online component. Dual enrollment programs will continue. The high school has secured 30 spots at Brown Summer High School for our students.

There will be professional development for teachers in summer. Additional to the required 10 days required there will be optional professional development that will be offered.

Mr. Capellan did provide the Board with a draft school schedule. The Lead Team worked with the scheduling committee and through a series of many meetings that also included

student government six different options were reviewed. After three months option #2 emerged. Faculty was able to provide more input and feedback on that option.

It will be a five period schedule and will be semester-based except for English, Math, Science and Advanced Placement courses will be year-long. The instructional time was reviewed and provides students a number of opportunities to take more classes. The schedule will rotate and once a week teachers will have a 90 minute period for projects and labs. Advisory would be once a week and that would rotate as well.

Mr. Capellan acknowledged that a lot of work was done by scheduling committee and by Mr. Mead to come up with the best possible schedule. Lunch periods will have 90 minutes of instruction and there will be three lunch periods (A, B, C). This year Advisory was able to meet every day, but the feedback was that it was too rushed. There will be longer periods and fewer transitions.

Mr. Capellan told the Board of all the important events that would be going on in May and June for the high school students.

Brown University will be conduction and external evaluation of the transformation effort.

There are changes and improvements in the climate and culture, especially around safety. Board members have visited the school and the school leadership has invited others to tour the school. Transitions in the hallways are better. Ms. Jones and Ms. DosSantos have again enforced many of the basic rules that needed to be tightened up. Ms. DosSantos maintains detailed files. We are moving in the right direction. It is far away from what the news portrays. It is a safe school and there are issues that will take place and no reason for anyone to feel unsafe. Parents have added support, 10 10 to 15 core parents, Transformation in Action invite will go out. The more people who come to see what is going on the myths will be dispelled.

F. Building committee reports and approval of bills

The committee has been meeting regularly now on Tuesdays at 1:00 PM. There is a new finance director for city. Things do not look good for additional bond money but there is 1.3M of the current bond funds that can be used for the high school, which will have to go out for bid. A full budget schedule will be presented next time.

Action: A motion to approve the fours bills was made by Ms. Rosado and seconded by Ms. Rodrigues.

Additionally, one of the bills for Irons Construction's was sent back to the company for review because it seemed too high and it what was before the Board was the approved resubmitted bill.

Vicki Bejma from the law offices of Stephen Robinson informed the Board that the Cowden Street lease title needed to be authorized to the city because that is how the city would be able to receive their housing funds. The Diocese signed it over to the district instead of the city, therefore the Board needed to sing it over to the city.

Action: A motion to turn it over to city was made by Ms. Rosado and seconded by Ms. Lefond, and approved 7, 0.

G. Streamlined Contract Discussion

The negotiation deadline was extended to June 24th. The mediation schedule will start this week.

V. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

VI. Consent Agenda

A motion to approve the minutes from the March 22nd meeting were made by Ms. Gonzalez, seconded by Ms. Lefond, and approved 5, 0 with two abstentions. A motion to approve the minutes from April 12th were made by Ms. Rosado and Ms. Rodrigues and approved 4, 0 with three abstentions. A motion to approve the personnel actions was made by Ms. Rodrigues, seconded by Ms. Lafond, and approved 7,0.

I. Superintendent's Report

Ms. Cindy Kendall is the new principal at Captain Hunt. She is a strong match for needs of our families. Ms. Kendall will present a year end review.

NECAP has been met with mixed success. A strong math curriculum was presented and a presentation on the English curriculum will be forthcoming. Veterans Elementary succeeded in making AYP along with Robertson and others missed by a few targets. The District is looking forward to the science NECAP testing for this week and expect good results. Summer expectations are throughout the district.

This week 15 parents, students, teachers will participate in continued Nellie Mae training for the four remaining slots for the continuation. We were initially among the 500 applicants. EBEC has visited with teaching teams. Our teachers that work hard every day outshine any others. We have work ahead of us but continue to meet the challenges.

II. Board Comments

Ms. Lafond thanked Dr. Gallo for keeping her door open for families, teachers, and staff. She thanked Ms. Jones for the tour of the high school. She believes that the climate and culture of the high school is good. She encouraged others to visit the school to truly experience what is going on. She acknowledged Juan Valdez, a crossing guard at Ella Risk. She stated that he truly was the morning greeter for the children. He graduated from CFHS and is active in TALL University and is attending CCRI. She welcomed Ms. Kendall and appreciated her early development background.

III. Next Board of Trustees

The next Board of Trustees regular meeting will be on Tuesday, May 24, 2011.

IV. 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 and litigation (certified teacher contract negotiations). 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 (hearing of grievance re: teacher transfer) was made by Ms. Rosado, seconded by Ms. Lafond, and approved 7,0.

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