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## Central Falls High School

On the afternoon of May 16, 2010, Central Falls Superintendent Francis Gallo and Central Falls Teachers' Union President Jane Sessums issued a joint statement: All 87 Central Falls High School teachers, librarians, counselors, and other staff members who had been publicly fired less than three months before would be rehired.<sup>1</sup> The agreement culminated a contentious, nationally publicized dispute about how to improve the chronically low-performing Central Falls High School (CFHS). Earlier in the school year, Gallo and the Central Falls School District Board of Trustees had pushed for a "transformation" approach, which called for a longer school day; teachers tutoring their students and eating lunch with them weekly; more professional development, during the school year and the summer; and a new teacher evaluation system to be conducted by an independent third party.<sup>2</sup> But, Sessums and the Central Falls Teachers' Union (CFTU) had rejected the plan, asking for more compensation and greater job security.<sup>3</sup> Facing a deadline to submit a plan to the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE), Gallo and the Board decided instead to pursue a "turnaround" model for CFHS, which required firing all staff members and rehiring no more than half.<sup>4</sup>

This decision coincided with the state's intense effort to win a share of the \$4.35 billion in the federal government's Race to the Top (RTTT) education reform competition. Succeeding in RTTT would provide some relief from the budget problems caused by slow recovery from the Great Recession.<sup>5</sup> Gallo and the Board's decision to fire all the teachers at CFHS became a lightning rod for debate nationally about how to address teacher effectiveness and failing schools. At the heart of the controversy were low student achievement scores and graduation rates. For example, at CFHS, the district's lone high school, only 7% of 11<sup>th</sup> grade students were proficient in math, 55% in reading, and the four-year graduation rate was 52% (**Exhibit 1**).<sup>6</sup>

For Gallo, Sessums, and the CFHS teachers, staff, students, and families, the school year had been intense, unpredictable, emotional, and stressful. In the space of three months, all CFHS staff had been publicly fired, told to reapply for their jobs, and then rehired. National media often portrayed the events in this small district as a fight between responsible reformers and self-interested unions. But, a closer look revealed a more complex situation. The requirements of a 1997 state law, which authorized the state commissioner to intervene in low-performing schools, appeared to conflict with the state's collective bargaining law, which required districts to negotiate with their teachers' union about hours, salary, working conditions, and all other terms of professional employment. The current CFTU contract would not expire until August 2011.<sup>7</sup> In addition, there was confusion about what the process of selecting an intervention model should involve and who from among the potential

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Professor Susan Moore Johnson and Research Associate Geoff Marietta prepared this case. This case was developed from published sources. PELP cases are developed solely as the basis for class discussion. Cases are not intended to serve as endorsements, sources of primary data, or illustrations of effective or ineffective management.

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stakeholders—taxpayers, district administrators, state officials, the teachers’ union, teachers, parents, students and others—should participate. The mass firing also raised the issue of whether staff were actually being fired or simply laid off, which had important consequences for the district’s future obligations to former employees.

## Central Falls, Rhode Island

Located seven miles north of Providence, Central Falls was one of the most densely populated cities in the United States.<sup>8</sup> The city’s 18,600 residents lived in hundreds of close-set, three-story, tenement-style houses packed into just over a single square mile.<sup>9</sup> In 2000, nearly 41% of Central Falls children lived below the federal poverty level, and the median household income for a family of four was \$33,520, just over half the national average.<sup>10</sup> Central Falls was governed by a mayor and five-member city council, elected by ward.<sup>11</sup> The mayor served as the executive of the city overseeing the public safety, public works, health, finance, and other departments.<sup>12</sup>

### *Central Falls School District*

Until 1991, the Central Falls school system was governed by an elected school board and drew its funding largely from the city and state.<sup>13</sup> But, the early 1990s’ economic recession had left Central Falls and its schools with a \$3 million budget deficit, despite a property tax rate that was the highest in Rhode Island at the time.<sup>14</sup> With the city on the verge of bankruptcy, the mayor and school superintendent asked the state to take over the school system, marking the first time a school district voluntarily had given up self-governance.<sup>15</sup> RIDE took control on July 1, 1991 and assumed financial responsibility for the school system, shifting the local expense for running the schools to the state’s taxpayers.<sup>16</sup> Initially, Central Falls School District (CFSD) was overseen by a special administrator from RIDE, who appointed the superintendent.<sup>17</sup> In 2002, an independent seven-member Board of Trustees was established to govern CFSD and select the superintendent.<sup>18</sup> Trustees were appointed by the State Board of Education; four members had to be city residents who were parents of students or former students of Central Falls schools and three members were at-large appointees.<sup>19</sup>

By 2010, CFSD served over 3,000 students in six schools: four elementary, one middle, and one high school.<sup>20</sup> Most students in the district were Hispanic and low-income: 72% were Hispanic, 25% white, and 81% were eligible for a free or reduced-priced lunch (nearly double the state average of 43%).<sup>21</sup> The district had an operating budget of nearly \$50 million with per-pupil expenditures of \$14,300.<sup>22</sup> From 1991 to 2004, CFSD had one superintendent, Maureen Chevrette, who oversaw the state-takeover of the district and establishment of the Board of Trustees.<sup>23</sup> In the summer of 2004, the Board of Trustees selected its first superintendent, who in 2006 resigned after only two years.<sup>24</sup> A veteran educator and former state commissioner of higher education acted as interim superintendent until March 2007, when the Board of Trustees unanimously voted to appoint Gallo as the superintendent.<sup>25</sup> A native Rhode Islander and former deputy superintendent of schools in Providence, Gallo was CFSD’s fourth superintendent in four years.<sup>26</sup> She arrived at a dynamic and challenging time for CFSD. The economic recession was months away and after four consecutive years of low performance the high school had just been ordered into restructuring, as required by No Child Left Behind.<sup>27</sup>

### *Central Falls High School*

With an enrollment just over 800 students, CFHS had a diverse population; 72% of students were Hispanic, 13% white, and 15% black.<sup>28</sup> Nearly 80% were eligible for free or reduced-priced lunch and

27% had limited English proficiency.<sup>29</sup> When Gallo began her new work as Central Falls superintendent in the summer of 2007, students at CFHS had seen four principals in four years and experienced four different school schedules.<sup>30</sup> Three external studies had been conducted about how to improve CFHS, and a delegation of 32 educators from RIDE and other urban districts had just completed a two-day observation of teachers and students ordered by the previous interim superintendent.<sup>31</sup> The school had just formed a partnership with the University of Rhode Island to raise student achievement.<sup>32</sup> The principal's position was open and Gallo promised to bring stability to the school with a new appointment: "I promised the kids I would do my utmost to get the best principal, to get leadership that is continuous here."<sup>33</sup> In one of her first major decisions as superintendent, Gallo hired Mario Andrade to run CFHS in July 2007.<sup>34</sup>

Bolstered by a new principal, a university collaboration, and nearly \$1 million in support from a local foundation, CFHS appeared ready to succeed.<sup>35</sup> But, Andrade's first year as principal at CFHS was tumultuous. Two cases of tuberculosis forced all students to be tested on two separate occasions.<sup>36</sup> As an added stress, education officials from the state, including then Commissioner of Education Peter McWalters, visited the high school to observe teaching and learning at the invitation of Gallo and the Board.<sup>37</sup> Then, on a Sunday night toward the end of the school year two teenagers were shot and killed, one a CFHS student.<sup>38</sup> The violence set off a panic that led to a city-wide curfew and parents keeping their children home from school.<sup>39</sup>

The following year, in 2008-2009, reforms continued as the school was divided into two "houses," one for freshman and sophomores, and another for juniors and seniors.<sup>40</sup> The lower house was divided into teams of 100 students who spent their entire day with a core team of six teachers representing the four core subjects, special education, and English as a second language.<sup>41</sup> The university partnership added a new academic center in CFHS, allowing students to enroll in both high school and college courses, and offering free tutoring.<sup>42</sup> As an added support, Gallo appointed long-time Central Falls teacher and middle school principal, Liz Legault, as co-principal of CFHS. By the end of the school year, the structural changes and strengthened university collaboration appeared to show promise. CFHS juniors posted a gain of nine percentage points in literacy and three percentage points in math.<sup>43</sup>

Over the summer of 2009, CFHS Co-principals Andrade and Legault geared up to implement four interdisciplinary themed academies in the upper house.<sup>44</sup> The school replaced its six-period schedule for the school day with four flexible 85-minute blocks.<sup>45</sup> Then in September 2009, just as the school had successfully introduced these changes, CFHS received another setback. Andrade was moved to a middle school principal position in the district and Legault took over as sole principal of CFHS. Andrade then resigned in October to become an assistant superintendent in a nearby town and in December Legault was asked to oversee both the middle and high schools.<sup>46</sup>

## Race to the Top (RTTT) Emerges as an Educational Force

In February 2009, Congress authorized a \$787 billion economic stimulus package through the American Resource and Recovery Act (ARRA), of which \$100 billion was earmarked for public education. While most of the ARRA education funding was used to prevent teacher layoffs, nearly \$8 billion was reserved to spur educational improvement using a federally defined reform agenda, including \$4.35 billion for RTTT. One key component of the agenda targeted chronically low-performing schools and proposed four intervention models:<sup>47</sup>

**Intervention Model 1, Turnaround:** (1) Replace principal and at least 50% of the staff; (2) adopt a new governance structure; (3) implement a new instructional model; (4) recruit, place, and

retain highly effective teachers; (5) provide job-embedded professional development; (6) promote the use of data; and (7) increase instructional time for students and collaborative time for teachers; and (8) provide social and emotional supports for students.

**Intervention Model 2, Restart:** Closure of a school and reopening it under a charter, charter management organization, or external management organization.

**Intervention Model 3, School Closure:** Closure of a school and distribution of the students to higher-performing schools.

**Intervention Model 4, Transformation:** (1) Use growth-driven evaluations to reward instructional achievement and eliminate ineffective teachers and leaders; (2) replace the principal; (3) provide job-embedded professional development; (4) recruit, place, and retain highly effective teachers; (5) use data to ensure aligned, effective instructional programming; (6) increase core content instructional time for students and collaborative time for teachers; (7) provide additional enrichment activities for students; (8) increase parental engagement; and (9) provide the school with sufficient autonomy to implement the reform model.

On July 24, 2009, President Obama and Secretary of Education Duncan officially announced the RTTT competition. According to the guidelines, the U.S. Department of Education would award states a portion of the \$4.35 billion, based on weighted selection criteria that totaled 500 points.<sup>48</sup> Fifty points—10% of the total application—were to be awarded for adopting one of the four intervention models for the lowest-performing schools.<sup>49</sup> Given the fiscal crisis at the time, RTTT served as a powerful force to motivate states toward what Duncan referred to as “common sense reforms.”<sup>50</sup> In an effort to achieve a competitive edge in the RTTT competition, state legislatures across the country began to adopt statutory reforms favored by the U.S. Department of Education, including the four federal school intervention models.<sup>51</sup>

### *Planning for School Intervention*

As guidance on RTTT emerged during the summer of 2009, Gallo expected that CFHS would be identified as a chronically low-performing school and, thus, require formal intervention.<sup>52</sup> Therefore, she convened several planning groups to discuss and develop a school intervention plan for the district.<sup>53</sup> A 35-member “think tank” composed of social service agencies, University of Rhode Island partners, teachers’ union members, and parents met to provide input on the intervention plan.<sup>54</sup> Twice a week Gallo also held informal morning conversations with teachers about the district’s reforms.<sup>55</sup> In addition, she presented the various intervention models to the Board of Trustees in October and November, explaining what they would mean to CFSD.<sup>56</sup>

The CFHS leadership change in September threatened to derail the process, but with district-veteran Legault still as principal, Gallo pressed on. Through the fall the transformation intervention model appeared to gather support and Gallo began presenting it as “The Right Reform at the Right Time.”<sup>57</sup> No viable charter management organization emerged to operate CFHS as a “restart” school and the “turnaround” model required the termination of all staff and rehiring no more than 50 percent. In a single high school district, the use of the turnaround option was tantamount to firing 50 percent of the high school teaching staff. Finally, for Gallo, the transformation model made sense because, she said, it “honors our dedicated teachers and their expertise.”<sup>58</sup>

With apparent support from the think-tank committee, Gallo informed the Board in October that the district would select the transformation model for low-performing schools in the district (though, at the time, no schools had yet been labeled as chronically low-performing and requiring

intervention).<sup>59</sup> In the late fall and early winter of 2009 Gallo moved on to design the specific elements of the transformation plan.<sup>60</sup> So, by the time CFHS was designated a low-performing school in need of intervention in January, she had established the transformation model's basic framework.<sup>61</sup> It included six requirements:<sup>62</sup>

- Increase the length of the school day by 25 minutes.
- Require teacher participation in a weekly student tutoring program one hour per week.
- Require that teachers partake of a communal student lunch one day per week.
- Require teacher participation in two weeks of summer professional development annually.
- Require teachers to meet for an additional 90 minutes per week to look at student work, engage in data study, plan units of study, and participate in professional development.
- Agree to cooperate with an independent third-party evaluator that would begin staff evaluations on March 1, 2010.

Gallo appeared to be a step ahead in the process of reform. As Gallo noted on the day CFHS was finally designated a persistently low-performing school: "It comes as no surprise. We've been a failing district for a number of years, and the high school has been failing for seven years. We will embrace it and make it work for us."<sup>63</sup> Yet, there were serious questions about the teachers' union involvement and agreement with the plan.<sup>64</sup> While the teachers' union had representation on the think-tank committee and was present at the highly public planning process, its participation in the actual construction of the transformation model was limited.<sup>65</sup> Gallo was the chief architect of the plan and she, alone, summarized progress on the selection of the model at board meetings.<sup>66</sup>

### *Rhode Island Responds to RTTT*

Through the fall of 2009, the Rhode Island State Board of Education, with Commissioner Deborah Gist's urging, laid the groundwork for new education policies that aligned with the RTTT criteria for improving struggling schools.<sup>67</sup> On January 7, 2010, the State Board approved new regulations governing intervention in low-performing schools, which it described in "The Protocol for Interventions: Persistently Lowest-Achieving Schools" (**Exhibit 2**).<sup>68</sup> The Protocol formalized the four federal intervention options, binding them to a powerful but largely untested 1997 state law, which authorized the commissioner of education to intervene in low-performing schools, exercising control over the "school and/or district budget, program, and/or personnel. If further needed, the school shall be reconstituted" (**Exhibit 3**).<sup>69</sup> The combined effect of the federal recommendations, state law, and the State Board of Education-approved Protocol enabled the commissioner to require districts and schools to use the four federal intervention options, regardless of their participation in RTTT or any of the other ARRA-funded grant.<sup>70</sup>

The fact that Gist could intervene in schools even if Rhode Island did not win RTTT was important. Sessums and the CFTU had refused to sign the memorandum of understanding (MOU) accompanying the state's RTTT application, which incorporated the four intervention models for low-achieving schools.<sup>71</sup> The guidelines for scoring RTTT applications called for awarding a total of 55 points, based on the percentage of teachers' unions in the state that supported the application. As Rhode Island would later learn, not having the endorsement of CFTU and other local unions seriously compromised its chance of winning during the first round of RTTT.<sup>72</sup>

On January 11, four days after state approval of the Protocol and eight days before Rhode Island's RTTT application was due, Commissioner Gist announced a list of six persistently low-performing schools that required intervention.<sup>73</sup> CFHS had made the list based on four selection criteria: 1)

performance in math and reading compared to state-wide average performance, 2) No Child Left Behind classification, 3) graduation rates against state-wide averages, and 4) improvement in reading and math from 2005 to 2009.<sup>74</sup> In making the announcement, Gist said, "While there are great teachers in every school in Rhode Island, these schools have struggled to provide a high-quality education. The time has come to act more decisively and comprehensively."<sup>75</sup> According to the Board of Education's Protocol, once CFHS was labeled a "Tier I" school, Gallo and the Board of Trustees had 30 days to convene a stakeholder group to provide feedback on the preferred intervention model. This group was to include a teacher, administrator, parent, youth representative from the high school, and the teachers' union president or designee.<sup>76</sup> Then, 15 days after the group was formed, around February 25, Gallo and the Board of Trustees had to submit a letter of intent naming the selected reform model for CFHS.<sup>77</sup>

## The 45-day Planning Window

In early January, Gallo found herself facing a dilemma. Despite the meetings and public planning process that led her to select the transformation model, the teachers' union did not agree with the six elements of the transformation plan, as it had been locally defined. On January 12, the day after CFHS was formally identified as a Tier I school, Gallo brought this issue to the attention of the Board of Trustees.<sup>78</sup> She noted that, although the teachers' union had refused to sign the MOU on the intervention models for RTTT, the launch year for the transformation plan at CFHS would not be delayed.<sup>79</sup> There would be one more public meeting on January 19<sup>th</sup> from 12 p.m. to 2 p.m. on the matter and then the district would proceed to approve the transformation plan at the board meeting on February 23.<sup>80</sup>

### *Planning or Negotiation?*

With the 45-day planning window shrinking, Gallo stated that she needed to secure the agreement of Sessums and the teachers' union before implementing the transformation plan. Otherwise, she would be forced to select the turnaround model, which would involve firing all the staff members and rehiring no more than half.<sup>81</sup> But, by January 26, the two parties had yet to meet on the issue, though "meetings were scheduled."<sup>82</sup> One issue confusing the process was whether the two parties were engaging in planning or formal negotiation. To Gallo it was a planning process, but to Sessums the transformation plan would require negotiation, since some of its elements were inconsistent with the current teachers' contract.<sup>83</sup> When Gallo and Sessums did finally meet the following week, disagreement on the plan emerged about teacher compensation for additional time worked and job security.<sup>84</sup>

The union asked that CFHS teachers be compensated for the lengthened school day and weekly tutoring, and that no teachers lose their jobs in the coming school year as a result of the new third-party teacher evaluation process.<sup>85</sup> The current collective bargaining agreement, which defined the length of the work day, professional time, and compensation, did not expire until August 31, 2011.<sup>86</sup> For example, the high school's schedule was well defined in the contract: four 85-minute classes a day starting at 7:50 a.m. and ending at 2:25 p.m. with a 53-minute "advisory" period once a week.<sup>87</sup> When teachers provided services beyond their regular duties, which were included in the school day, they were to be paid at an hourly rate equivalent to their prorated per diem salary.<sup>88</sup> However, there was some ambiguity about whether the transformation plan's requirement for teachers to eat lunch with their students once a week, would necessitate further negotiation. One section of the contract stated that CFHS teachers had "no duty assignments," while another noted that high school teachers "shall be assigned classes, lunch, and an unassigned period."<sup>89</sup>

Finally, the teachers' union criticized the entire foundation of the transformation plan, saying it was not grounded in research-based best practices. As one state union official said, "What is troubling to me and what angers and upsets people involved is the way in which the teachers' union is being portrayed around the six points. There wasn't a resistance to implementing a high-quality transformation model, but these six elements weren't programmatic, research-based or data driven." Sessums concurred: "We have always been open to real reforms and the majority of the changes proposed by the district, but we know that true transformation will require more than just changing work rules and adding hours to the school day. We cannot afford to experiment with our students. There needs to be a connection to the program that we know works."<sup>90</sup>

Gallo disagreed, emphasizing that changes were necessary to turn around the failing school: "We need these changes so we can move from where we are to where we need to be for the health and safety of the whole state. We have to meet these students where they are, bring these students up and lift the bar."<sup>91</sup> The district's position was that teachers would not receive extra pay for the longer school day and tutoring, though they would get \$30 an hour for the two additional weeks of summer training and the 90 minutes a week of common planning time (**Exhibit 4**).<sup>92</sup> Gallo saw the once-a-week lunch duty as an opportunity to build community in the high school: "Right now, they [teachers] have no duties. But I don't want them to see lunch as a duty. I want them to establish true relationships with not a few students, but all students."<sup>93</sup> As for job security, Gallo claimed that she had offered "100%" job security to CFHS teachers during their discussions, but Sessums recalled that Gallo "could not guarantee to all our members that they would keep their jobs."<sup>94</sup>

### *February 9, 2010*

Frustrated by the negotiating impasse, Gallo prepared a two-page letter to Sessums and presented it at the February 9<sup>th</sup> Board meeting (**Exhibit 5**).<sup>95</sup> In the letter Gallo gave Sessums and the teachers' union a deadline of February 12<sup>th</sup> noon to sign off on the transformation plan. Otherwise, "it will be incumbent upon me to choose the Turnaround School Reform Model."<sup>96</sup> Gallo read the letter aloud to ensure that it was recorded for the public record.<sup>97</sup> After Gallo spoke, Sessums addressed the Board saying that teachers' union was aware of the possible termination of the CFHS teachers.<sup>98</sup> She reiterated that the teachers' union wanted the transformation model, but just needed more time to work out the evaluation and extended-day elements.<sup>99</sup> Several teachers and a number of students followed Sessums with expressions of support for the teachers at CFHS.<sup>100</sup>

### *February 12, 2010*

Early on the morning of Friday, February 12<sup>th</sup>, Sessums delivered the teachers' union's written response to Gallo (**Exhibit 6**).<sup>101</sup> In it, Sessums wrote, "We fully support the Central Falls School District adoption of the transformation model for school improvement and encourage your communication of that fact to the Commissioner of Education."<sup>102</sup> However, Sessums informed Gallo that she could not and would not agree to change the collective bargaining agreement currently in place without meeting to "...review potential changes in time, compensation, or other issues related to the transformation model."<sup>103</sup> Gallo interpreted the letter as a refusal to the proposed six elements of the transformation plan and prepared to move forward with the turnaround plan.<sup>104</sup>

Gallo appeared on a local television show later that morning to discuss the implications of the CFHS intervention model with James Parisi, a Rhode Island AFT field representative. The host opened the show by stating, "Welcome to *Newsmakers*. Good morning Dr. Gallo. The headline earlier this week was, 'Superintendent sets Friday deadline for Central Falls Teachers.' This program, *Newsmakers*, tapes on Friday. What is the headline tomorrow?"<sup>105</sup> Gallo hesitated for a moment and

responded, “The headline tomorrow would be ‘Dr. Gallo selects the turnaround model for Central Falls High School’.”<sup>106</sup> She continued, “We received a letter from the union simply stating that they do support the transformation model, but they did not agree to any of the six items I had outlined as a foundation for that transformation model.”<sup>107</sup> Parisi countered, “The deadline for Friday at noon is a fictitious deadline . . . what the Protocol says is that school districts have 45 days to pick a model . . . then, the parties have 120 days to work out a plan. We think what Dr. Gallo has done is put the planning in front of the selection of the model.”<sup>108</sup> The debate over the deadline aired another important conflict between the district and union. According to another state law, districts were required to send teachers’ layoff notices by March 1.<sup>109</sup>

## Teachers Fired

With the Board of Trustees’ support, Gallo notified Commissioner Gist of the district’s intent to select the turnaround model for CFHS.<sup>110</sup> A week later, on February 19<sup>th</sup>, Gallo mailed letters to all teachers at CFHS informing them of her recommendation to fire them at the end of the school year.<sup>111</sup> On February 23<sup>rd</sup>, Gist approved Gallo’s proposal to use the turnaround model and gave the district 120 days to develop a plan to improve CFHS.<sup>112</sup> That night, at the Board of Trustees meeting, Gallo addressed those attending, which included most CFHS staff members:<sup>113</sup>

In full respect for the dignity and rights of each child in this school system, I stand before you tonight to reiterate facts you should already know. I do so to clarify the reasons for the resolutions before the Trustees this evening. I do so to inform everyone as to why this is happening and to do what is demanded by justice, since so many contrived stories have been set about that misinform and twist the truth. . . . Union leadership heard what it wanted; continued to make demands of a state-run district owned by all the taxpayers of RI in an effort to squeeze more money out of a nearly collapsing budget. . . . Tonight I renew my recommendation and commitment for the Turnaround Model of Intervention.

As Gallo finished, shouts rang out in the auditorium: “You’re a coward!” “You should be ashamed!” “Look up, Gallo! Look at us!”<sup>114</sup> The board then voted 5-2 to fire all staff at the school.<sup>115</sup> The 93 staff names—74 classroom teachers, reading specialists, guidance counselors, school psychologist, principal, and three assistant principals—were read aloud. In an apparent act of solidarity, those present in the audience stood as their names were called.<sup>116</sup> CFHS staff were then expected to continue teaching throughout the remaining four months of the school year after which their terminations would become effective.

### *Swift and Divided Reactions*

Reactions to the firings were immediate and divided. Some applauded Gallo’s courage in standing up to the teachers’ union. Others criticized the district for engaging in “blackmail bargaining” and “extortion.”<sup>117</sup>

**Students and families react** For the most part, CFHS students supported their teachers, though Gallo and others pointed out that these were only the students who were still in school—a compelling point considering the school’s low graduation rate.<sup>118</sup> And while several parents voiced their support of the teachers at board meetings, the views of parents were largely missing from the public debate.<sup>119</sup>

One senior at CFHS noted that the teachers “help us out and get the job done. They treat us with respect.”<sup>120</sup> Another agreed: “They stay when we need help. They love us.”<sup>121</sup> A recent graduate

emphasized the teachers' commitment to students, "The teachers care so much. I've seen them stay after school. I've seen them struggle. It's the students. They don't want to learn."<sup>122</sup> A junior, who had little contact with his father and whose mother worked long hours at a factory, commented on the teachers' role in his life: "My teachers, they're there for me. They push me forward. My parents, they tried to, but they don't know how. I don't think they fully know me as a person to help me."<sup>123</sup> Other students felt that Gallo and the Board's actions discredited their education at CFHS. Said a recent CFHS graduate and current college student, "I feel like they're saying my education, my certificate, was worth nothing. I worked for my diploma, as everyone else did. To be just a statistic is hurtful."<sup>124</sup>

Parents who spoke up defended the teachers. One parent with three children in the high school, all with academic honors, stood up for the teachers saying, "If all these kids are doing so good, the teachers must be doing something good."<sup>125</sup> Another parent put blame on the students for the high school's poor performance, "It's not fair. They shouldn't be punished because the students are lazy."<sup>126</sup> A parent of a freshman contended that parents also deserved some of the blame: "Where are the parents? I think the parents are half responsible for what's going on."<sup>127</sup>

**Teachers react** Teachers' reactions ranged from anger and sadness to resignation. Commenting on Gallo's assumption that teachers were not eating lunch with students and should be at least once per week, a guidance counselor remarked, "Who does this woman think she is? What does she think we're doing here? The strength of Central Falls High School is familiarity."<sup>128</sup> He continued, "We're carrying this immense burden here. We have a bag of bricks on our back that you don't get at places where it's taken for granted that everyone will succeed."<sup>129</sup> Teachers also criticized the firing as being politically motivated. One said, "It's all about the politics, about making Fran Gallo look good. The issue is having the right to negotiate. Once we allow the superintendent to get her foot in the door, where will it stop?"<sup>130</sup> Other teachers expressed frustration that their hard work was not recognized. One noted, "I leave here at 6, 7 at night, working with kids, coaching, getting lesson plans, doing interactive literacy. That's what people don't see."<sup>131</sup> Another emphasized the challenge of working with low-income students, "They're a transient community. It's more than test grades. We give them a family. We show them how to live."<sup>132</sup> Still other teachers were embarrassed by being fired. As one teacher lamented, "It makes you feel like all of your expertise, all that you know, any degree you might have, is worthless. I've never been fired from anything, and to be fired, it's devastating."<sup>133</sup>

At the same time, not all teachers were happy with Sessums and the teachers' union approach to the situation. In an email message to the newspaper reporter, one teacher wrote, "The union blew it. . . we were never given the chance to vote. The union leadership made the decision for us and many of us are not happy."<sup>134</sup> Another teacher reiterated the point, "We do feel—not exactly betrayed, but rather shocked—at how the union chose to answer for us. We as a union have taken votes to change the schedule by seven minutes but yet were not asked or allowed to vote on our professional careers. It doesn't make sense or sit well with many of us."<sup>135</sup>

**Politicians, union leaders, and pundits react** On the state and national level, politicians and pundits roundly supported Gallo and the Board's decision to fire all the staff at CFHS. In backing the turnaround model, Commissioner Gist stated, "I support doing whatever it takes to get the results we need . . . I commend Superintendent Gallo and the Central Falls Board of Trustees for engaging in an extensive community engagement effort throughout the process of selecting a model."<sup>136</sup> Rhode Island Governor Carcieri agreed, offering additional criticism to CFTU and its lack of support for RTTT:

We can no longer stand by as our schools underperform. . . . I commend Superintendent Gallo, the Central Falls School Board of Trustees, and Commissioner Gist for their courageous action . . . and I am confident the end result will be a stronger Central Falls High School that puts students' education above union politics. It is unfortunate that the union leadership chooses to be an obstacle in improving our education system rather than embracing reforms that will benefit students and the community as a whole. This is the same union leadership that refused to support the state's Race to the Top application, which could bring tens of millions of dollars into Rhode Island to improve our education system."<sup>137</sup>

At the national level, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan said he "applauded" Gallo and the Board of Trustees for "showing courage and doing the right thing for kids."<sup>138</sup> He continued, "This is hard work and these are tough decisions, but students only have one chance for an education and when schools continue to struggle we have a collective obligation to take action."<sup>139</sup> President Obama, offered his thoughts on the situation: "So if a school is struggling, we have to work with the principal and the teachers to find a solution. We've got to give them a chance to make meaningful improvements. But if a school continues to fail its students year after year after year, if it doesn't show any sign of improvement, then there's got to be a sense of accountability."<sup>140</sup>

Not surprisingly, state and national union leaders harshly criticized the firings. The AFL-CIO executive council stood behind the CFTU: "We stand in support of the Central Falls Teachers' union in its fight to improve teaching and learning . . . preserve the rights of its members and keep the teachers where they belong."<sup>141</sup> For her part, AFT President Randi Weingarten held Gallo responsible for the school's problems: "We are surprised that Superintendent Frances Gallo, who wants to fire every school employee, has not accepted any responsibility herself, especially since she has been at the helm for three years."<sup>142</sup>

Even conservative radio and television host Glenn Beck weighed in on the events: "Central Falls High School superintendent, Frances Gallo. God bless you, Frances. . . . If the unions won't do it, fire them all. Break the back of the leech that's on our neck . . . America is a society based on merit, not entitlement."<sup>143</sup>

## Dénouement

On March 1, one week after the mass firings, the teachers' union filed three unfair labor practice charges with the State Labor Relations Board for failure to negotiate, refusal to provide information to the union, and terminations in retaliation for teachers' union activities.<sup>144</sup> Sessums and the teachers' union then released an alternative reform plan for the high school, which matched many of the elements in the original transformation plan including a longer school day and more rigorous evaluations.<sup>145</sup> Notably, the plan did not mention compensation.<sup>146</sup> Sessums indicated that ". . . discussions about money would not derail future talks with Gallo," adding that the teachers' union was "ready to collaborate with the district and work toward changes that will ultimately give our students the education they deserve."<sup>147</sup>

After reading the union's plan, Gallo was ecstatic, "My heart skipped a beat. I thought, 'They are basically saying they want what we want for the first time, with the kind of assurances I need.' This brings the union back with us, in the conversation about meaningful reform. It's where they should be."<sup>148</sup> On March 3, Gallo sent word to Sessums that she would be willing to work with the teachers' union to revisit the plan for CFHS.<sup>149</sup>

The next day Rhode Island was named as an RTTT finalist, moving the state one step closer to winning \$126 million in education aid from the federal government.<sup>150</sup> On making it to the “sweet sixteen” Gist noted, “This is a recognition not just of our plan and what’s been done in the past six months, but it’s a culmination of all of the hard work our teachers and others have done for several years to move Rhode Island on the path to becoming the best education system in the world.”<sup>151</sup>

As the Rhode Island RTTT team prepared its final presentation later that March, Gallo and Sessums struggled to define their approach to developing a plan for CFHS.<sup>152</sup> Again, Gallo said talks were about planning, while Sessums insisted that the discussion required formal negotiations.<sup>153</sup> Gist finally offered guidance on the issue, stating that there were actually two tables involved in the process—one for planning and another for negotiation. A spokesperson for RIDE clarified: “The union is invited back to the planning table. But the commissioner is very clear that . . . if some conditions come up that affect the salary and working conditions of teachers, then they would head back to the negotiating table.”<sup>154</sup>

On March 11, the two parties met for the first time since the firings. At the closed-door meeting the district and teachers’ union discussed the qualities they would like to see in the school’s next principal.<sup>155</sup> (Legault would be returning to her previous position as a middle school principal.)<sup>156</sup> They agreed to use a mediator for future meetings.<sup>157</sup> Even with private mediated talks underway, the district and union publicly proceeded as if all the staff members at CHFS had been fired. On April 22, Gallo informed CFHS teachers that they could reapply for their jobs over the next several weeks.<sup>158</sup> Less than a week later, the teachers’ union filed a lawsuit with the U.S. District Court in Providence to block the firings as unconstitutional and in violation of the collective bargaining agreement.<sup>159</sup> By mid-May, Gallo stated that more than 700 people had applied for the open positions at CFHS, including all but one of the dismissed teachers.<sup>160</sup> And in the middle of it all, Rhode Island received word that it was not a winner in round one of the RTTT competition.

### *Teachers Rehired*

Finally, on May 16, the district and union reached an agreement to rehire all fired staff members.<sup>161</sup> The agreement included a transformation plan that was nearly identical to Gallo’s six elements in the original transformation plan.<sup>162</sup> It included a longer school day, a new teacher evaluation, more after-school tutoring, increased professional development opportunities for teachers, and a requirement that teachers eat lunch with students one day a week.<sup>163</sup> In return, teachers would receive an annual stipend of \$3,000 plus another \$1,800 for professional development time.<sup>164</sup> As a part of the deal, the union also agreed to withdraw the unfair labor-practice charges and drop its federal lawsuit.<sup>165</sup> The only major difference between Gallo’s original plan and the final agreement was that the new evaluation would not be implemented until the following school year.<sup>166</sup>

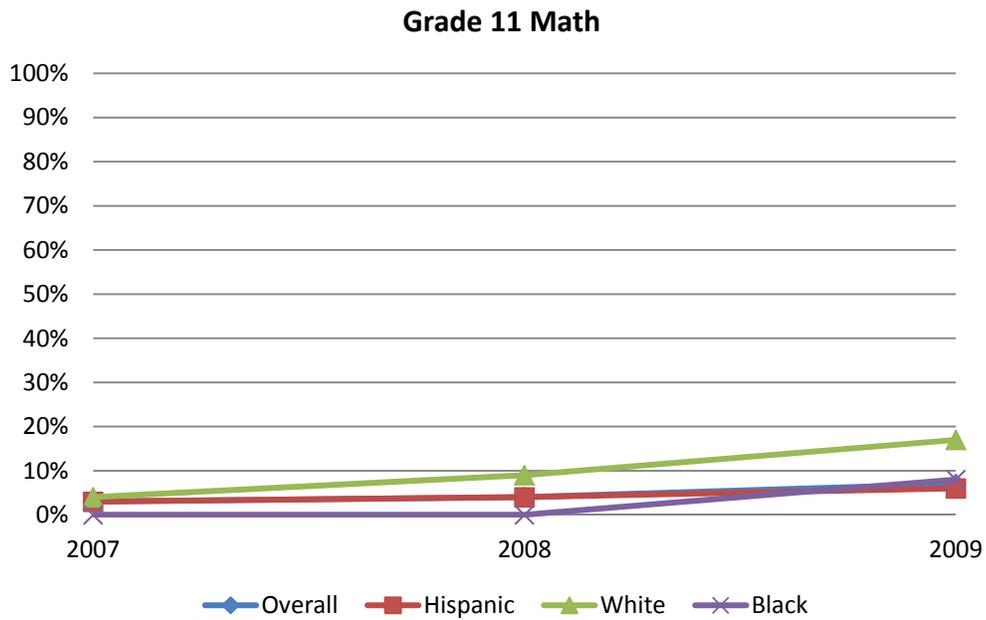
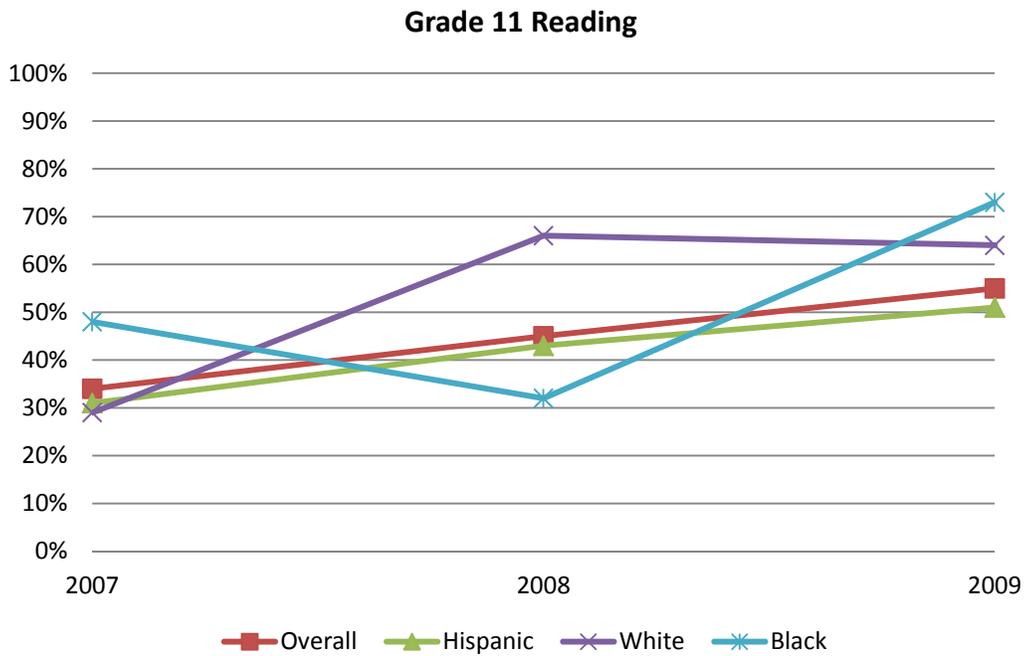
Gallo called the agreement “historic” and said that the contentious dispute eventually “. . . got us all to the table and talking about what it takes to move a school, what it takes to build real reform.”<sup>167</sup> Gist expressed her satisfaction that the two sides had worked together: “When we can work collaboratively, that’s the right thing.”<sup>168</sup> Secretary Duncan added his congratulations on the deal: “I salute the administrators, union leadership, and teachers in Central Falls and Rhode Island for working through what has been a very difficult period and coming to agreement on a plan to improve their school. Turning around a high school is very tough work. . . . It is clear from this agreement that everyone is willing to give more in terms of time, training, and tutoring.”<sup>169</sup> On the union’s behalf, Sessums hoped “the rest of the country can learn from our experiences and avoid the pitfalls of mass terminations.”<sup>170</sup>

## The Challenge Ahead

The next few months would be critical to the future success of reform at CFHS. Data suggested that the school's minority and low-income students were performing much as their counterparts across the state. Math and reading achievement scores for Hispanic and African American students at CFHS were slightly lower than the state average for these subgroups (**Exhibit 8a** and **8b**). The same was true for low-income students and English language learners (**Exhibit 9a** and **9b**). Clearly, the challenges of meeting these students' learning needs were not unique to CFHS.

After a long and bitter fight that left hurt feelings and distrust in its wake, the Central Falls community was left to implement a transformation plan for a school that still had no principal. Gallo and the CFHS staff had to turn quickly to the school year ahead. Who would lead the school? Could CFHS make meaningful change with the same teachers who had been fired in February and rehired in May? Would the school abandon programs that seemed to be paying off? Would labor and management find a way to work together? What role would the teachers' union play in charting future reforms? Would there be meaningful involvement by parents and families in the days ahead?

**Exhibit 1** Percentage of Central Falls High School 11<sup>th</sup> Grade Students Proficient or Advanced 2007-2009



Source: Rhode Island Department of Education, "School and District Report Cards," Rhode Island Department of Education Web site, <http://www.ride.ri.gov/RIDE/reportCards.aspx>, accessed June 2011.

**Exhibit 2** Rhode Island Department of Education Protocol for Intervention in Persistently Lowest-Achieving Schools

**Allowable School Reform Models.**

Each School Reform Plan must be built around one of the following four models for intervention. Regardless of which model is chosen (with the exception of closure), the School Reform Plan must meet the required conditions set forth in section (VI) of this Protocol in addition to individual requirements for the specific school intervention model.

**i. Turnaround model.**

1. A turnaround model is one in which an LEA must—
  - i. Replace the principal and grant the new principal sufficient operational flexibility (including in staffing, calendars/time, and budgeting) to implement fully a comprehensive approach in order to substantially improve student achievement outcomes and increase high school graduation rates;
  - ii. Use locally adopted competencies to measure the effectiveness of staff who can work within the turnaround environment to meet the needs of students:
    - A. Screen all existing staff and rehire no more than 50%; and
    - B. Recruit and select new staff;
  - iii. Implement strategies such as financial incentives, increased opportunities for promotion and career growth, and more flexible work conditions that are designed to recruit, place, and retain highly qualified staff with the skills necessary to meet the needs of the students;
  - iv. Provide staff with ongoing, high-quality, job-embedded professional development that is aligned with the school’s comprehensive instructional program and designed with school staff to ensure that are able to facilitate effective teaching and learning and successfully implement school reform strategies;
  - v. Adopt a new governance structure, which may include, but is not limited to:
    - A. Requiring the school to report to a new “turnaround office” in the LEA or SEA;
    - B. Hire a “turnaround leader,” who may also fill the role of the school transformation officer as detailed in section VI.2. of this Protocol, who reports directly to the Superintendent or Chief Academic Officer; or,
    - C. Enter into a multi-year contract with the LEA or SEA to obtain added flexibility in exchange for greater accountability;
  - vi. Use data to identify and implement an instructional program that is research-based, “vertically aligned” from one grade to the next and aligned with State academic standards;
  - vii. Promote the continuous use of student data (such as from formative, interim, and summative assessments) to inform and differentiate instruction in order to meet the academic needs of individual students;
  - viii. Establish schedules and implement strategies that provide expanded learning time (as defined in this Protocol); and



- A. Use data to identify and implement an instructional program that is research-based, “vertically aligned” from one grade to the next and aligned with State academic standards;
  - B. Promote the continuous use of student data (such as from formative, interim, and summative assessments) to inform and differentiate instruction in order to meet the academic needs of individual students; and,
  - C. For secondary schools, establish early-warning systems to identify students who may be at risk of failing to achieve to high standards or graduate.
- iii. Increased learning time and community-oriented schools. The LEA must:
- A. Establish schedules and implement strategies that provide expanded learning time (as defined in this Protocol); and,
  - B. Provide ongoing mechanisms for family and community engagement.
- iv. Operational flexibility and sustained support. The LEA must:
- A. Give the school sufficient operational flexibility (in staffing, calendars/time, and budgeting) to implement fully a comprehensive approach to substantially improve student achievement outcomes and increase high school graduation rates; and
  - B. Ensure that the school receives ongoing, intensive technical assistance and related support from the LEA, the SEA, or a designated external lead partner organization (such as a school turnaround organization or an EMO).

Source: Rhode Island Department of Education, “The Protocol for Interventions: Persistently Lowest-Achieving Schools,” Rhode Island Department of Education Web site, [http://www.ride.ri.gov/ride/Docs/Protocol\\_for\\_Interventions.pdf](http://www.ride.ri.gov/ride/Docs/Protocol_for_Interventions.pdf), accessed June 2011.

**Exhibit 3** Rhode Island General Law § 16-7.1-5, Intervention and support for failing schools

## § 16-7.1-5 Intervention and support for failing schools.

- a. The board of regents shall adopt a series of progressive support and intervention strategies consistent with the Comprehensive Education Strategy and the principles of the “School Accountability for Learning and Teaching” (SALT) of the board of regents for those schools and school districts that continue to fall short of performance goals outlined in the district strategic plans. These strategies shall initially focus on:
  1. Technical assistance in improvement planning, curriculum alignment, student assessment, instruction, and family and community involvement;
  2. Policy support;
  3. Resource oversight to assess and recommend that each school has adequate resources necessary to meet performance goal; and
  4. Creating supportive partnerships with education institutions, business, governmental, or other appropriate nonprofit agencies. If after a three (3) year period of support there has not been improvement in the education of students as determined by objective criteria to be developed by the board of regents, then there shall be progressive levels of control by the department of elementary and secondary education over the school and/or district budget, program, and/or personnel. This control by the department of elementary and secondary education may be exercised in collaboration with the school district and the municipality. If further needed, the school shall be reconstituted. Reconstitution responsibility is delegated to the board of regents and may range from restructuring the school’s governance, budget, program, personnel, and/or may include decisions regarding the continued operation of the school. The board of regents shall assess the district’s capacity and may recommend the provision of additional district, municipal and/or state resources. If a school or school district is under the board of regents’ control as a result of actions taken by the board pursuant to this section, the local school committee shall be responsible for funding that school or school district at the same level as in the prior academic year increased by the same percentage as the state total of school aid is increased.

Source: Rhode Island Department of Education, “Rhode Island General Law § 16-7.1-5, Intervention and Support for Failing Schools,” <http://www.ride.ri.gov/commissioner/edpolicy/Article31.aspx#16-7.1-5>, accessed July 2011.

**Exhibit 4** District and Union Positions on Six Elements of Transformation Plan

<b>Element of the Transformation Model</b>	<b>CFSD offer</b>	<b>CFSD Total</b>	<b>CFTU offer</b>	<b>CFTU total</b>
Element 1: Increasing the length of the school day by an additional 90 hours per year	No compensation	\$0	Hourly rate of annual salary	\$8,100 per teacher, salary plus fringe
Element 2: Weekly tutoring after school, one hour per teacher per week	No compensation	\$0	\$30 per hour	\$1,090 per teacher
Element 3: Communal lunch with the students	No compensation	\$0	Unknown	N/A
Element 4: Two weeks of professional development in the summer	\$30/hour	\$1,800 per teacher	\$30/hour	\$1,800 per teacher
Element 5: 90 minutes of common planning time per week beyond the school	\$30/hour	\$1,620 per teacher	Unknown	N/A
Element 6: Evaluation of all high school teachers by a third party	Guarantee of 80% job security		Guarantee of 100% job security	N/A
<i>Cost to CFSD, per teacher</i>		<i>\$3,420</i>		<i>\$10,990</i>
<i>Cost to CFSD, Total</i>		<i>\$253,080</i>		<i>\$813,260</i>

Source: Compiled by casewriters based on Jennifer Jordan, "Supt. Sets Friday Deadline for Central Falls Teachers," *The Providence Journal*, February 11, 2010; Central Falls School District Board of Trustees, "February 23, 2010 Meeting Minutes," Rhode Island Secretary of State Web site, <http://sos.ri.gov/documents/publicinfo>, accessed June 2011.

**Exhibit 5** February 9<sup>th</sup> Letter from Gallo to Sessums

February 9, 2010

Dear Ms. Sessums,

As you know, Central Falls High School has been identified as one of the state's five "persistently lowest-achieving schools" pursuant to the Rhode Island Department of Education's *Protocol for Intervention: Persistently Lowest-Achieving Schools*. The Central Falls School District has been in corrective action for several years and the high school has continuously failed to meet the performance standards established by the Department of Education and the Board of Regents under both State and federal law.

According to the *Protocol*, "When a strong improvement plan has failed to such a degree that a school is considered to be one of the persistently lowest-achieving schools in the state, it is incumbent on the LEA to take even stronger action." (*Protocol*, p.1). The *Protocol* goes on to state, "Under no circumstances will persistently lowest-achieving schools be allowed to continue to operate under status quo conditions." (Ibid). Finally, the *Protocol* describes four allowable school reform models – Transformation, Restart, Turnaround, or Closure. The LEA must select one of these four modes for Central Falls High School in order to begin formulating a specific plan in accordance with the *Protocol*.

Many committed individuals in Central Falls have met on numerous occasions in an attempt to turn around our failing high school. We have held five evening meetings a month, including the two Trustees meetings where the Race to the Top agendas were discussed in depth. Each week on Tuesday and Thursday mornings further discussions were held informally to keep interested teachers abreast of the evolving situations. As part of this aggressive public outreach, I have also convened all major local stakeholders, including your union, in a series of 13 Think Tank sessions. Throughout all of these meetings, there has been an underlying consensus to pursue the Transformational Model to reform our high school. I need to re-emphasize that the Transformation Model is the only model in which it is possible for the majority of teachers and administrators at the school to retain their jobs.

Unfortunately, to date we have been unable to reach agreement with you regarding the implementation of key elements of the Transformation Model, specifically including the following:

- Increase the length of the high school day so that the student day is 8AM – 3 PM
- Formalize the high school teacher commitment of weekly tutoring for one hour outside of school time
- Each teacher will partake of a communal lunch with students one day each week
- Agree to continue paid professional development for two weeks outside of the typical school calendar
- Agree to meet for 90 minutes each week in order to look at student work, assess data, plan units of study and seek continuous improvement in professional practice

- Acknowledge that third party evaluators will begin evaluation of all high school teachers on March 1, 2010.

Please note that these six elements listed above are what I view as the core elements of my being able to inform the Commissioner that Transformation is a viable option for our high school. For your convenience, I have attached (Attachment 1) all elements of both the Transformation and Turnaround models directly from the *Protocol*.

With your agreement to move forward, I will notify the Commissioner that Central Falls has selected the Transformation School Reform Model. Without your agreement, since the Closure and Restart models are not viable options at this time, it will be incumbent upon me to either choose the Turnaround School Reform Model for Central Falls or inform Commissioner Gist that we have collectively failed to select an intervention model for the high school and cannot begin planning for implementation. Pursuant to the *Protocol*, that latter option "shall be cause to trigger the reconstitution authorities granted" to the Board of Regents to Reconstitute Central Falls High School. In the case of either Turnaround or Reconstitution, I cannot provide any assurances to any faculty member or administrator at the high school that they will remain employed at the start of the next school year.

It is my sincere desire that we find a way to work together to implement Transformation, which I firmly believe is in the best interests of the students of the high school, as well as the members of the Central Falls Teachers Union. Because of the urgency of this matter and in order to implement the Transformation Model I must have your signed agreement to the above by February 12 at noon.

Sincerely yours,

Frances Gallo

If you agree to assist the Central Falls School District to implement Transformation at Central Falls High School in accordance with the conditions set forth in the RIDE *Protocol for Intervention: Persistently Lowest-Achieving Schools*, please sign below and forward a signed copy to my office.

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Assented to as to form and substance on behalf of the Central Falls Teachers' Union in regard to implementation of the Transformation School Reform Model at the Central Falls High School for the 2010-2011 school year and beyond.

Source: Marc Comtois, "Yorke Airs Both Sides of Central Falls Debate," *Anchor Rising*, February 26, 2010, [http://www.anchorrising.com/barnacles/cat\\_central\\_falls.html](http://www.anchorrising.com/barnacles/cat_central_falls.html), accessed June 2011.

**Exhibit 6** February 11<sup>th</sup> Letter from Sessums to Gallo

February 11, 2010

Dr. Frances Gallo  
Superintendent of Schools  
Central Falls School District  
21 Hedley Avenue  
Central Falls, Rhode Island 02863

Dear Dr. Gallo:

You witnessed my receipt of your February 9 letter at the Central Falls Board of Trustees meeting. That letter asks for a response by noon on Friday. I remain mystified as to the reason for the deadline. In response to your letter, please be advised that it is the position of the Central Falls Teachers' Union that:

1. We fully support the Central Falls School District adoption of the transformation model for school improvement and encourage your communication of that fact to the Commissioner of Education as outlined in the RIDE Protocol for Interventions.
2. We pledge to negotiate any necessary changes to the collective bargaining agreement necessary to implement programs and practices related to the transformation model as determined by the district teachers and administrators in a thorough collaborative deliberative process as recommended by the RIDE Protocol for Interventions.
3. We continue to hold that it is contrary to federal law, our collective bargaining agreement, and the Rhode Island tenure law to terminate all high school faculty. In addition to the proposed action being illegal, it is coercive, unnecessary, disheartening, and counterproductive to school improvement. Further, such action is not warranted under the transformation model.
4. We cannot accept a process wherein the district will terminate staff, use outsiders to evaluate staff, and make retention decisions later this spring. As you know, no CFHS teacher currently has an unsatisfactory evaluation that would necessitate a corrective course of action. If I am mistaken, please provide me additional information.
5. Since the District's RFP process to identify potential transformation programs has begun, please share all responses to the RFP with me and Walter Hourahan. This will allow us to engage in a meaningful dialogue with high school faculty on the adoption of beneficial programs and policies to enhance student achievement. Such sharing of information is in keeping with the transparent, collaborative process outlined in the RIDE Protocol for Interventions.

6. In addition, please provide me with budget information indicating resources that will be available through the federal School Improvement Grant.

Once we have this information and have had an opportunity to review it, we will be happy to schedule meetings to review potential changes in time, compensation, or other issues related to the transformation model.

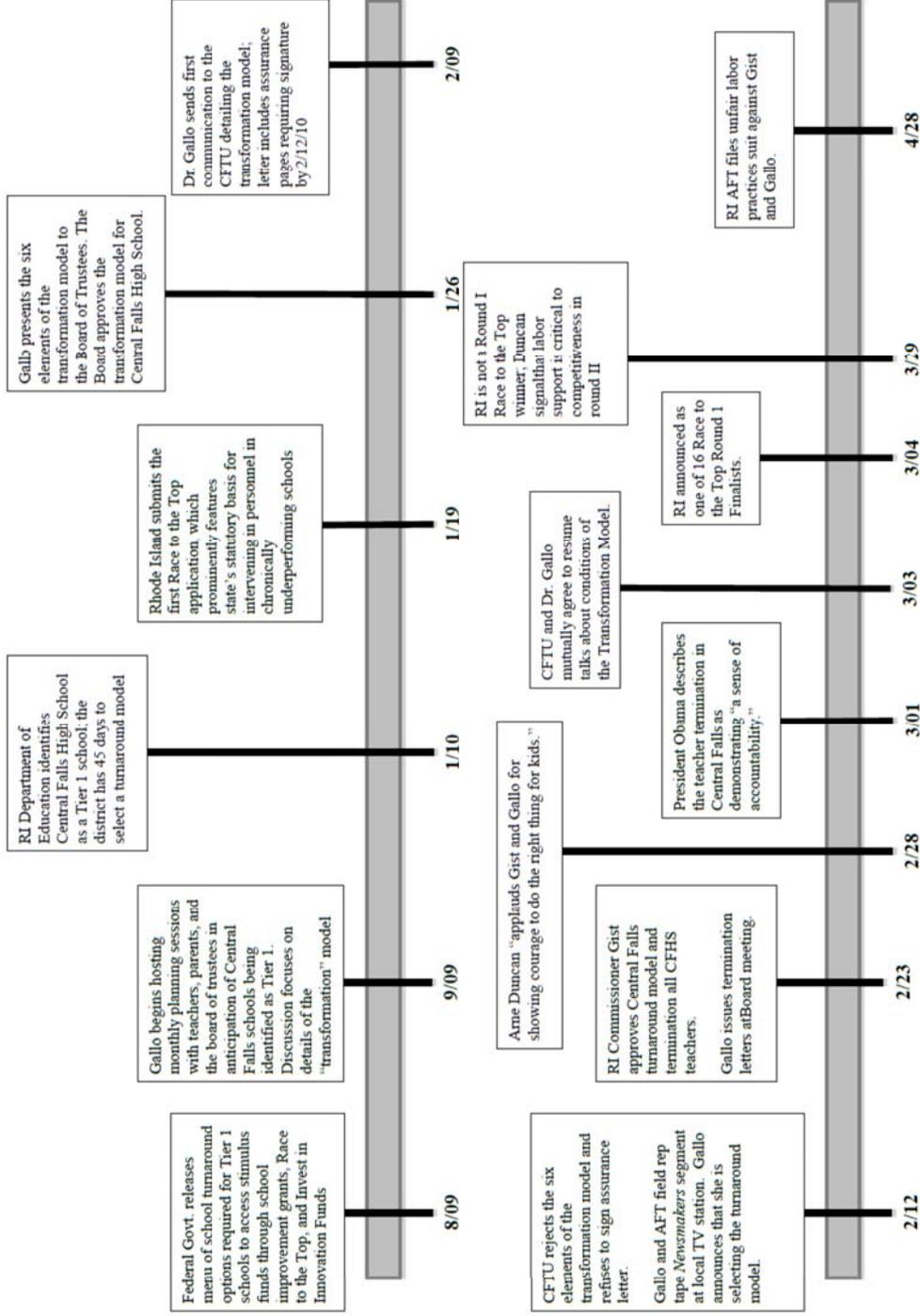
Sincerely,

  
Jane M. Sessums

cc: CFTU membership

Source: Central Falls Teachers' Union.

Exhibit 7 Timeline of Events



Source: Casewriter.

**Exhibit 8a** Percentage of CFHS and Rhode Island 11<sup>th</sup> Grade Hispanic Students Proficient or Advanced in Reading 2007-2009

	2007	2008	2009
<b>CFHS Hispanic 11<sup>th</sup> Grade Reading Proficiency</b>	31%	43%	51%
<b>State Hispanic 11<sup>th</sup> Grade Reading Proficiency</b>	40%	50%	59%
<b>Difference</b>	-9	-7	-8

**Exhibit 8b** Percentage of CFHS and Rhode Island 11<sup>th</sup> Grade Hispanic Students Proficient or Advanced in Math 2007-2009

	2007	2008	2009
<b>CFHS Hispanic 11<sup>th</sup> Grade Math Proficiency</b>	3%	4%	6%
<b>State Hispanic 11<sup>th</sup> Grade Math Proficiency</b>	6%	9%	10%
<b>Difference</b>	-3	-5	-4

Source: Rhode Island Department of Education, "School and District Report Cards," Rhode Island Department of Education Web site, <http://www.ride.ri.gov/RIDE/reportCards.aspx>, accessed June 2011.

**Exhibit 9a** Percentage of CFHS and Rhode Island 11<sup>th</sup> Grade Low-Income Students Proficient or Advanced in Reading 2007-2009

	<i>2007</i>	<i>2008</i>	<i>2009</i>
<b>CFHS Low-Income 11<sup>th</sup> Grade Reading Proficiency</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>54%</b>
<b>State Low-Income 11<sup>th</sup> Grade Reading Proficiency</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>61%</b>
<b>Difference</b>	<b>-16</b>	<b>-11</b>	<b>-7</b>

**Exhibit 9b** Percentage of CFHS and Rhode Island 11<sup>th</sup> Grade Low-Income Students Proficient or Advanced in Math 2007-2009

	<i>2007</i>	<i>2008</i>	<i>2009</i>
<b>CFHS Low-Income 11<sup>th</sup> Grade Math Proficiency</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>8%</b>
<b>State Low-Income 11<sup>th</sup> Grade Math Proficiency</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>13%</b>
<b>Difference</b>	<b>-3</b>	<b>-9</b>	<b>-5</b>

Source: Rhode Island Department of Education, "School and District Report Cards," Rhode Island Department of Education Web site, <http://www.ride.ri.gov/RIDE/reportCards.aspx>, accessed June 2011.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Eric Tucker, "RI School District Agrees to Rehire Fired Teachers," *Associated Press Newswires*, May 16, 2010, [www.factiva.com](http://www.factiva.com), accessed June 2011.

<sup>2</sup> Jennifer Jordan, "Supt. Sets Friday Deadline for Central Falls Teachers," *The Providence Journal*, February 11, 2010, [www.factiva.com](http://www.factiva.com), accessed June 2011.

<sup>3</sup> Jennifer Jordan, "Disagreement Surfaces Over Central Falls, RI, School Reform Talks," *The Providence Journal*, February 19, 2010, [www.factiva.com](http://www.factiva.com), accessed June 2011.

<sup>4</sup> Jennifer Jordan, "City to Fire Every High School Teacher," *The Providence Journal*, February 13, 2010, [www.factiva.com](http://www.factiva.com), accessed June 2011.

<sup>5</sup> David Wessel, "Did 'Great Recession' Live Up to the Name?" *Wall Street Journal*, April 8, 2010, <http://online.wsj.com>, accessed June 2011.

<sup>6</sup> Rhode Island Department of Education, "Central Falls High School Student Achievement," Rhode Island Department of Education InfoWorks Web site, <http://infoworks.ride.ri.gov/school/central-falls-high-school>, accessed June 2011.

<sup>7</sup> Rhode Island Department of Education, "Rhode Island General Law § 16-7.1-5, Intervention and Support for Failing Schools," <http://www.ride.ri.gov/commissioner/edpolicy/Article31.aspx#16-7.1-5>, accessed July 2011; Central Falls School District and Central Falls Teachers' Union, Collective Bargaining Agreement Expiring August 31, 2011.

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