

For immediate release:

**Central Falls School District**  
Contact: Yaviri Grosso  
District Communication Specialist  
401-727-7700 ext. 102



**STATEMENT FROM CENTRAL FALLS SCHOOLS SUPERINTENDENT  
DR. FRANCES GALLO REGARDING TEACHERS PICKET**

**Central Falls (Wednesday, October 14, 2009)** – On June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2009, the Central Falls School District implemented a change to positively affect our most fragile vulnerable children. We held the bond between child and his/her one-on-one teacher assistant to have greater priority over seniority. We made this change with the concurrence of the Union—whose representatives fully comprehended the disruption wrought to fragile children when they arbitrarily lose the one-on-one assistants with whom they have developed a relationship. We heard from no one during the remaining weeks of June or throughout the extended summer days of July and early August; but on September 1, we received numerous grievances regarding this change.

The issue is strictly one of seniority. Having been employed in this system longer than another, the senior person has the sole right to select which student he or she will help--regardless of the agreement to change this practice, regardless of the effects on children who already labor under severe challenges.

Our children do not have an organized voice; most of their parents feel helpless in this situation. Parental fear is two-fold: if they come out in support of this change, their child's right to privacy is broken; if they come out in support and the battle rages on and the contract trumps student need, what will the relationship between child and new teacher assistant be like?

The Central Falls School District is saying that our children come first. We are asking, who is best suited to help this child make progress, academically, socially, behaviorally,

and emotionally? Our response is that it is those with a proven track record of success. A seniority-based system does not serve this purpose.

We call upon the Union to honor their agreement, and direct their energies towards ensuring justice for all -- *including* the children whom the Union members are paid to serve.

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