



RESOLUTION
AUTHORIZING THE FOLLOWING AMENDMENTS TO THE HOME
RULE CHARTER TO APPEAR ON THE JULY 2025 BALLOT

Introduced by City Council President Robert Ferri, Council President Pro Temp Alberto Rivas-Lugo,
Councilperson Tatiana Baena, Councilperson Kevin Kazarian, Councilperson Rafael Peguero, and
Councilperson Laurilim Rosado-Martinez

May 12, 2025

WHEREAS, Marian Wright Edelman once stated, “if we don't stand up for children, then we don't stand for much;” and

WHEREAS, after 34 years of state oversight, the City commissioned an expert report that included a year-long effort to deeply understand the challenges facing Central Falls Schools —interviews, focus groups, and listening sessions with more than 700 educators, students, families, and community leaders— which ultimately reached the conclusion that Central Falls students have been subject to systematic failure and deserve better; and

WHEREAS, following the report, the City launched a community advisory board (CAB) with leaders from the city, schools, and local and state labor partners and held a series of public meetings on issues of finance and governance, amongst others; and

WHEREAS, the expert report and the CAB process resulted in the introduction of state legislation – HB-6255 and a future Senate Bill - that seeks to return the democratic control of the Central Falls School District from state leaders to a Central Falls School Board; and

WHEREAS, the CAB worked to design a new governance structure for our schools resulting in a consensus-based decision to recommend a Home Rule Charter change that creates a 9-member hybrid School Board composed of five (5) appointed and four (4) elected members; and

WHEREAS, the combined effect of HB-6255 and the Home Rule Charter amendments finally gives the people of Central Falls — students, families, educators, and local leaders— a voice in the future of Central Falls schools because local control means accountability, transparency, and a direct investment in our children’s success; and

WHEREAS, this creative solution gives the city time to take control of the schools and identify financial efficiency opportunities and address financial concerns while being fiscally responsible as this bill seeks to

ensure adequate, sustainable and transparent funding for the Central Falls Schools through an update of the stabilization fund which defines a clear calculation for the fund based on actual expenses; and

WHEREAS, the status quo has failed our students for too long; this legislation ensures that families, educators, and local leaders finally have a voice in shaping the future of our schools, while also providing a financially responsible path forward.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City Council of the City of Central Falls hereby supports HB-6255 and a future Senate Bill and authorizes, approves and requests that the Secretary of State put the following question on the July 2025 ballot in support of the specific Charter amendments as outlined in *Exhibit A* below:

1. CHARTER AMENDMENT REGARDING THE CENTRAL FALLS SCHOOL BOARD: Shall sections 6-107 and 6-108 of the Charter be amended to create a Central Falls School Board nominating commission composed of community leaders and a new nine (9) member Central Falls School Board, four (4) elected members and five (5) appointed members as recommended by community and school leaders, replacing the five (5) member Central Falls School Committee?



Robert Ferri
City Council President



Alberto DeBurgo
City Clerk

Central Falls Home Rule Charter
Exhibit to Resolution - Changes for Consideration of the City Council
May 12, 2025

Sec. 6-107. - Election and appointment of members of school ~~committee~~ board.

The school ~~committee~~ board shall consist of ~~five~~ nine members, ~~one~~ four of whom shall be elected citywide at-large from each of the five wards as the same are now constituted and five appointed in the following process, notwithstanding any other charter provision or law to the contrary:

(1) Central Falls School Board Nominating Committee

There shall be a Central Falls School Board Nominating Committee of five (5) members with a diversity of lived experiences reflective of the students, families, and educators in the city selected according to the following guidelines:

- One (1) member shall be selected by a majority vote of the city council. At least one member selected by the city council shall be a family member of a current Central Falls School District (CFSD) student at the time of their appointment. "Family member" is defined as any primary caregiver for a child enrolled in CFSD.
- One (1) member shall be selected by the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education (K-12 Council). After an initial term of three (3) years, this member shall be replaced by another appointment from the city council.
- One member shall be selected by the mayor.
- One member shall be selected by the Central Falls Teachers Union. At the time of selection, this member shall be a current or former educator.
- One member shall be selected by the Student Council at Central Falls High School. At the time of selection, this member shall be a current CFSD student.

The terms for members, other than the student, shall be for three (3) years. The student member shall serve for a term of one (1) year. The Committee shall hold an organizational meeting within seven (7) days of all appointments having been received by the city clerk, shall elect a chair, vice-chair and secretary and shall meet regularly to timely and effectively perform their duties, in compliance with all open meeting requirements under city and state law.

The School Board Nominating Committee shall nominate candidates for appointment to the mayor. From this list of candidates, the mayor shall subsequently submit nominees to the city council for approval of their appointment. In the first appointment cycle subsequent to the passage of this Charter amendment, the Committee shall submit to the mayor no fewer than ten (10) Board candidates, including two (2) candidate nominees from each required group for Appointed members as follows, except for the initial appointment of the K-12 Council:

Members of the School Board Nominating Committee shall not be eligible to be candidates. The Mayor shall then submit eight (8) candidate nominees to the City Council. From among the Mayor's candidate nominees, the Council shall appoint five (5) School Board members, by majority vote of members, except for the first set of appointments, which shall be four (4) appointments and the appointment from the K-12 Council.

After the first cycle of School Board appointments, the Committee shall submit to the mayor three (3) times as many Board candidates as there are vacancies for appointed positions on the Board, including at least two (2) candidates from each of the stakeholder group(s) represented by the appointed members whose terms are expiring. The mayor shall then submit to the city council two (2) times as many Board candidates as there are vacancies. From among the mayor's nominees, the city council shall appoint new Board members to fill the vacancies, by majority vote.

If, in any cycle, the Nominating Committee is unable to submit to the mayor three (3) times as many Board candidates as there are vacancies for appointed positions, the duty shall fall to the mayor to submit to the city council at least as many Board nominees as there are vacancies.

(2) Appointed Members of the Central Falls School Board

The five (5) appointed members of the Central Falls School Board shall include individuals belonging to these stakeholder groups, at the time of appointment:

- a current CFSD student in 11th or 12th grade;
- a current primary caregiver of a current CFSD student*;
- a former educator of CFSD*;
- a former student of CFSD*; and
- an appointment by the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education (K-12 Council). After an initial term of three (3) years, this member shall be a community member at large, appointed via the process in Section ____.

Initial appointments shall have a term of three (3) years, however, the appointments with a * indicate an initial term length of four (4) years. All subsequent appointments shall have a term of two (2) years. The city council shall appoint new School Board members to fill vacancies by majority vote of qualified members, with a commitment to maintaining allotted spaces for each stakeholder group. Should any appointee's stakeholder group status change during an appointed term, that appointee may complete the duration of their term. Appointed members do not need to be residents or qualified voters in the city of Central Falls.

(3) Elected Members of the Central Falls School Board

The four (4) elected members of the Central Falls School Board shall be qualified electors in the city of Central Falls and State of Rhode Island. They shall follow all required City and State procedures and guidelines to declare and run for office in the City. They shall be invited and encouraged to participate in public forums and other forms of public engagement prior to or during each election cycle. Members elected in the initial election cycle shall have a term of three (3) years. All members elected in subsequent election cycles shall have a term of two (2) years.

(4) The Central Falls School Board

The first Monday in January following a regular election of Board members, there shall be an organizational meeting wherein a majority of the Board members shall elect a chair, a vice-chair and a secretary. The Board shall meet regularly to timely and effectively perform their duties, in compliance with all open meeting requirements under city and state law. The School Board shall have all powers and

duties as defined in R.I.G.L. §§ 16-2-9 and 16-2-34. No member, whether appointed or elected, shall serve more than eight (8) consecutive years.

~~The terms of members of the school committee shall begin on the first Monday of January following the year in which they were elected, except that at the election held on January 19, 1954, a member from the first ward shall be elected to serve from February 1, 1954, until the first Monday of January 1956, a member from the second ward and a member from the third ward to serve from February 1, 1954, until the first Monday of January 1958, and a member from the fourth ward and a member from the fifth ward to serve from February 1, 1954, until the first Monday of January 1960 and until their successors are elected and qualified. A member elected to fill a vacancy shall serve for the balance of the unexpired term. At each municipal election to be held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November 1955 and in every odd year thereafter, there shall be elected for a term of six years commencing with the first Monday in January then next succeeding a member of the school committee to replace the one whose term shall be expiring.~~

Sec. 6-108. - Vacancies in membership of school committee board.

~~In case of death, resignation, or inability to serve, or removal from the ward from which they were elected, of any member of the school committee, or if for any other cause there shall be a vacancy in the membership of the committee, a majority of the members of the school committee may appoint, as a member of said committee, a person who at the time of their appointment shall be a qualified elector in the ward where such vacancy occurs. Such person shall hold office as a member of the school committee until the first Monday in January, succeeding the municipal election next following their appointment, at which election the unexpired term shall be filled by the electors of the ward so affected. Any vacancy among the elected members shall be filled pursuant to city and state law. Any vacancy among the appointed members shall be filled pursuant to the Central Falls School Board nominating committee process.~~

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