

**NORTH BRANFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION  
SPECIAL MEETING  
January 22, 2004**

The North Branford Board of Education met on January 22, 2004 at the North Branford High School Cafeteria. The meeting was called to order at 7:05 and the following members attended:

Board Chair:	Ronald Haskins
Board Secretary:	Amy Sochocki-Norton
Board Members:	Lisa Gagliardi Penny Q. Seaman Cheryl Smith Kris Vanacore
Superintendent of Schools:	Dr. Robert K. Wolfe

**I. Visitors**

Director of Business/Personnel:	Donald Winnicki
Director of Curriculum/Instruction:	Joan Follo
Director of Technology:	Tim Hartigan
Principals:	Dr. David Perry, NBHS Alan Davis, NBIS Nancy Brittingham, TVES Robin Brown, JHS Dr. Karen Johnson, STW

Rose Angeloni	Nancy Tipping	Elaine Larson
Deborah Welton, NBFT	Grace Krom	Michael DiLella
Christine Imperato	Todd Stoeffler	Karen Haskins
Angela Westwood	James Westwood	Marilyn Mesner
Janice DeAngelo	David McMahon	Dolly Potter
Cliff Potter	Claudia Faughnan	Elizabeth Caplan
Donna Mueller	Dee McKeown	Patty Darragh
Lynn Jenkins		

Ron Haskins, Board Chair, asked for visitor comments asking them to keep comments at two minutes in length.

Nancy Tipping remarked that North Branford High School has an academic Bowl Team that

January 22, 2004

travels throughout the state competing against other school districts. She mentioned that this activity is not provided with transportation and puts our students at a disadvantage as some of our students cannot drive or are not allowed to transport other students. She requested that the Board of Education earmark money in next years' budget for transportation for this activity.

Patty Darragh, teacher at STW, invited all Board of Education members to tour Stanley T. Williams School to see the condition of the school and programs offered. She remarked that if Board members give the school a day's notice she would provide tour guides.

Lynn Jenkins asked all Board members to please use all the available research they can and keep this research and data in mind before they make budget decisions. She also requested that the Board support our teachers.

Deborah Welton, teacher at TVES, stated the Board could gather information from the teachers as to what it is like working with 27 students in a classroom. She also mentioned health issues and conditions of the buildings.

**MOTION:** Moved by Penny Seaman and seconded by Amy Norton to nominate Cheryl Smith as Board Vice-Chair.

**MOTION:** Moved by Penny Seaman and seconded by Amy Norton to close nominations for Board Vice-Chair.

<b>Ron Haskins</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Amy Norton</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Lisa Gagliardi</b>	<b>Nay</b>
<b>Penny Seaman</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Kris Vanacore</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Cheryl Smith</b>	<b>Aye</b>

**MOTION PASSES 5-1**

January 22, 2004

**MOTION:** Moved by Kris Vanacore and seconded by Lisa Gagliardi to nominate Amy Sochocki-Norton as Board Secretary.

**MOTION:** Moved by Kris Vanacore and seconded by Lisa Gagliardi to close nominations for Board Secretary.

<b>Ron Haskins</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Lisa Gagliardi</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Kris Vanacore</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Penny Seaman</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Cheryl Smith</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Amy Sochocki-Norton</b>	<b>Aye</b>

**MOTION PASSES 6-0**

## **II. Recognition**

None at this time.

## **III. Student Representatives**

Dr. Wolfe noted that our student's representatives were not present as NBHS students are having mid-term exams.

## **IV. Approval of Previous Minutes**

**MOTION:** Moved by Lisa Gagliardi and seconded by Kris Vanacore to accept the Board of Education minutes of December 23, 2003 with one correction.

Lisa Gagliardi noted that on page 2, paragraph 1, line 3 the word objectively should have read objectivity.

**MOTION:** Moved by Lisa Gagliardi and seconded by Kris Vanacore to accept the Board of Education minutes of December 23, 2003 as amended.

**ALL VOTED AYE 6-0**

January 22, 2004

**MOTION:** Moved by Kris Vanacore and seconded by Lisa Gagliardi to accept the Board of Education minutes of December 18, 2003.

**ALL VOTE AYE**

Kris Vanacore mentioned that at the December 18, 2003 meeting she requested to have discussion concerning Colafati Field on January's agenda.

Dr. Wolfe stated that Kris should contact the Board Chair to have this item added to the February agenda.

## **VI. Communications**

Letter from: Connecticut Commission On Arts, Tourism Culture, History and Film  
An-Ming Truxes, Director

Re: Notifying TVES of their award of a grant in the amount of \$1,623.00. This grant will support performances of swing dance workshops by Brian Gillie, dance and theater workshops by Adam Battelstein and storytelling performances by Tom Lee.

Letter from: Mark Heidorn, Director Program Operations, CMT

Re: CMT – Delay in issuing final reports

Dr. Wolfe stated that because of technical issues that must be resolved the CMT final reports would be delayed.

January 22, 2004

**VII. Superintendent's Report**

**A. Resignations** - None at this time.

**B. Appointments** – None at this time.

Lisa Gagliardi asked if the resignation of the Special Education teacher at NBHS was already accepted and the job posted.

Dr. Wolfe stated that it was not as the letter of resignation was not received until after the Board packet was finalized. He stated this resignation would be on the February 2004 agenda and this person is still employed until February 20, 2004.

**C. Leaves** – None at this time.

**D. Field Trip Requests**

The Superintendent has received a field trip request from TVES for grade 5 students to visit Old Sturbridge Village in Massachusetts on June 1, 2004.

**MOTION:** Moved by Kris Vanacore and seconded by Lisa Gagliardi to approve the field trip request from TVES for grade 5 students to visit Old Sturbridge Village in Massachusetts on June 1, 2004.

**ALL VOTED AYE**

**E. Around the Schools**

**STW**

1/27 Storyteller, Tom Lee – Traditional storyteller focusing on social science themes  
2/5 Kindergarten Registration  
2/12 Judy Buch – Puppeteer and storyteller focusing on character education

**JHS**

2/2 – 20 Read-a-thon  
2/5 Kindergarten Registration

**TVES**

1/16 “The Up Show” – School-wide assembly program presented by Mr. Dwyer’s class  
1/20 NBPOPS Open House - TVES & NBIS Band Ensembles  
1/21 PTO Meeting – Guest Speaker Dr. Wolfe – “Good to Great”  
1/28 & 2/2 Brian Gillie “Songs in America” school-wide assembly and grade 5 workshops  
2/11 Friendly Helpers visit Evergreen Woods

**NBIS**

2/5 Report cards issued  
2/5 Grade 7 Parent/Students – Evening presentation through the Guidance Dept.  
6:30 – 8:00 p.m. – “Take a Bite Out of Bullying”

**NBHS**

1/20-23 Mid-Terms  
1/26-27 High School Course Selection  
1/28 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Course Selection  
2/2 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Parent Night Registration  
2/5-6 Final Course Registration  
2/10 Report Cards Issued  
2/11 Honor Society Senior Citizen Luncheon  
2/12 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Final Course Registration

**\*\* Note: *Student Council Semi-Formal being moved to future date due to athletic games that evening.***

January 22, 2004

Kris Vanacore questioned why NBHS had course selection for students before the budget was finalized as the Board is looking at Block Scheduling and students might have to change their course selections later on.

Dr. Perry stated students would have to look at both possibilities.

Dr. Wolfe stated the budget is not finalized until the May Town Meeting and that is why we must have two schedules.

Kris Vanacore also mentioned that "The Up-Show" at TVES would be presented tomorrow, January 23, 2004.

**F. Board of Education 2005 Meeting Dates**

The Superintendent will provide suggested dates for 2005 Board of Education Meetings for a second reading and Board action.

**MOTION:** Moved by Penny Seaman and seconded by Amy Norton to approve the 2005 Board of Education Meeting Dates as submitted.

Lisa Gagliardi asked if the August 18, 2005 meeting could be held earlier as she must drive her son to college in Florida and would miss this meeting.

Amy Norton stated she would object to the dates being changed as this is a very important meeting and she would like to see all Board members attend.

**MOTION:** Moved by Amy Norton and seconded by Cheryl Smith to change the Thursday, August 18, 2004 Board of Education meeting to Tuesday, August 16, 2005.

**ALL VOTED AYE 6-0**

Kris Vanacore asked if the 2004 Board of Education meeting calendar could be put on the February 2004 agenda so changes could be made if needed.

Ron Haskins stated Board members would work it out.

**G. Committee Assignments**

The Superintendent provided an updated committee assignment list. Since the last meeting, the Chair of the Board has made assignments to the Policy Committee and Budget Committee. In addition, a new committee, which the Board Chair is creating, entitled Board/Town Council Liaison.

The Superintendent needed to have committee assignments completed as a number of important committee meetings are scheduled.

<b>Negotiations</b>	Ron Haskins, Penny Seaman, Lisa Gagliardi
<b>Budget</b>	Ron Haskins, Cheryl Smith, Lisa Gagliardi
<b>Building &amp; Grounds</b>	Ron Haskins, Kris Vanacore
<b>Curriculum</b>	Amy Norton, Lisa Gagliardi, Penny Seaman
<b>Pension</b>	Kris Vanacore
<b>Policy</b>	Kris Vanacore, Cheryl Smith, Penny Seaman, Lisa Gagliardi (alt)
<b>ACES</b>	Kris Vanacore, Cheryl Smith
<b>Strategic Planning</b>	Kris Vanacore, Cheryl Smith
<b>Building Committee</b>	Ron Haskins, Kris Vanacore
<b>Calendar Committee</b>	Amy Norton
<b>Board/Town Council Liaison</b>	

Lisa Gagliardi questioned if the new committee had to be voted on by all Board members.

Dr. Wolfe stated the Board Chair could establish a new committee.

Ron Haskins stated anyone on the Board who is interested could inform him but it has to go before the Town Council first. He mentioned this committee would be composed of three Board of Education members and three or four Town Council members.

Penny Seaman remarked that she feels this committee will be very important as Board members and Town Council members will be able to sit down and talk over issues as they come up.

Lisa Gagliardi stated an interest in serving on this committee, as did Penny Seaman.

Kris Vanacore questioned if any Board member could attend a sub-committee meeting of the Board.

Dr. Wolfe stated they could as long as it is a public meeting.

Kris Vanacore asked that all Board members be informed of all sub-committee meetings.

**H. The Summer of '04**

The Superintendent was pleased to announce that plans have been nearly finalized for enrichment activities for the Summer of '04. The summer theme is taken from a new program entitled "The Way It Works." A new feature of the summer program - to commence on a pilot basis - will be the ability to purchase a hot or cold lunch. This feature has been developed in conjunction with the Supervisor of Food Service, Ed Slubowski.

Dr. Wolfe mentioned that this program is separate from the summer academic program and last year over 1,400 slots were filled for a nine- week period.

**I. Project Choice**

The Superintendent provided to the Board an update on its commitment to Project Choice. Project Choice is a major component of our ability to provide multiculturalism within our schools.

<b><u>Grade</u></b>	<b><u># of students</u></b>
<b>STW</b>	
1	1
2	1
<b>TVES</b>	
3	2
4	2
5	2
<b>NBHS</b>	
9	4
10	6
11	2
12	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>

January 22, 2004

**MOTION:** Moved by Penny Seaman and seconded by Cheryl Smith that the Board of Education endorses Project Choice for the 2004/2005 school year and its continuation of 26 seats.

Penny Seaman stated she would like to see the Board open more space at North Branford Intermediate School. She remarked that students at the middle school need to see the differences and similarities of other students.

Kris Vanacore questioned what the class sizes would be at STW K-1.

Dr. Johnson stated 17 and 18 students per classroom.

Dr. Wolfe stated that two slots were closed at NBIS last year and the Board must give him guidance if they would like to see additional slots opened at NBIS.

Kris Vanacore questioned why only twenty-three students were shown in the figures.

Dr. Wolfe stated one student moved to North Branford and two students have moved out.

Ron Haskins stated we should keep the same number of seats we currently have as they will be moving up and eventually be at NBIS.

Amy Norton stated she is uncomfortable when she looks at the class sizes of 26 and 27 students and she would only support one extra student at NBIS.

**MOTION:** Moved by Penny Seaman and seconded by Cheryl Smith that the Board of Education endorses Project Choice for the 2004-2005 school year and add one seat to its 26 seats for a total of 27 seats. The extra seat would be at NBIS seventh grade.

**ALL VOTED AYE 6-0**

**J. Superintendent's 2004/2005 Budget Proposal**

The Superintendent presented his 2004/2005 Budget Proposal. Work on this proposal by the administrative team commenced in early October. The Superintendent distributed copies of the proposal at the meeting. This will allow Board members the ability to review the proposal and supportive data in advance of the upcoming budget discussions that are noted on the enclosed Budget Calendar.

January 22, 2004

Dr. Wolfe stated that his budget proposal calls for 11.93 % increase remarking that it is not the lowest nor the highest proposal in the area. He feels it is the Superintendent's responsibility to identify the best thinking of their administrative staff.

Dr. Wolfe thanked his administrative staff, Donald Winnicki and Central Office staff for their help in preparing his budget proposal.

Superintendent Wolfe mentioned that this budget is an attempt to budget the needs of the school system in a slower economy but at the same time meet critical mandates of the state.

Dr. Wolfe mentioned that he and his administrators cut over one million dollars in new personnel before the budget proposal was finalized. He stated 6.2% of the budget was on the supply side for pencils, paper, art supplies, etc.

Dr. Wolfe remarked there are three places where our resources come from with the largest resource being from local taxes, 69.70%, grants, 29.81% and tuition .50 %. He mentioned that 57.50% goes towards salaries and 18.39% towards benefits. He stated that much of the increase is due to costs our town must now absorb as state and federal grants have been eliminated and we must make up the differences.

Dr. Wolfe questioned how we improve our district to go from good or very good to a great educational district and how we will accomplish it.

Dr. Wolfe spoke on Strategic Planning, expanded Special Education, Block Scheduling for NBHS, Life Skills Program, Technology equipment, Transportation, Building Improvements Project SAGE and the new program NBSS (former Chapter I).

Dr. Wolfe mentioned that four elementary school classroom teachers are included in the budget proposal to reduce class size to a reasonable level.

Penny Seaman questioned if there is room at STW and TVES for new classrooms.

Dr. Wolfe stated yes, but music might have to be taught in the classrooms but he feels it is more important to have another 2<sup>nd</sup> grade.

Penny Seaman questioned if the Board could find a way to make it attractive for some third graders at JHS to attend third grade at TVES.

Lisa Gagliardi mentioned the attraction could be lower class sizes.

Amy Norton stated she didn't feel parents who have children that attend JHS would want their children to leave their friends and school to attend TVES.

January 22, 2004

Dr. Wolfe remarked that it is his experience that people are very passionate about the schools they are attending and the Board would have to force the issue.

Amy Norton questioned how many students this would affect.

Dr. Wolfe stated about twenty students.

Kris Vanacore asked if the Board could receive a breakdown of class times for Physical Education, Art and Music and how many times classes were attended each week.

Dr. Wolfe stated that his budget proposal includes the add-back of one instructional aide for the North Branford Strategies for Success Program. Three additional aides are required to rebuild the program.

Dr. Wolfe mentioned if the Board doesn't accept responsibility for this program then the program will be gone as there is no grant money available.

Dr. Wolfe mentioned there is only one Art educator for over 700 students at NBHS and our Spanish classes are overcrowded and we cannot at this time accommodate the students who want to take Spanish 5 but not at the advanced level. He also mentioned we need another music teacher as this program continues to grow.

Kris Vanacore questioned how many eighth graders continue band in the ninth grade.

Penny Seaman asked if Dr. Wolfe could provide the Board with numbers in our French classes at NBHS.

Dr. Wolfe mentioned it is the intent of the school system to offer programming for a new class of high school special education students who are currently being serviced in outside institutions. This program will be for students who have emotional and social problems. The tuition is now between \$30,000 and \$40,000 per student. Dr. Wolfe mentioned we could eventually hire an aide whose salary would be paid by a grant from the state.

Dr. Wolfe distributed information on Bridges, a high school program developed specifically for the special education and regular education student population.

Kris Vanacore questioned if these students would also attend regular high school classes.

Dr. Wolfe stated they would if they could handle the classes and their schedule would be tailored for their individual needs.

Dr. Wolfe stated NBHS could not implement block scheduling without hiring extra staff.

Lisa Gagliardi stated that even if block scheduling didn't start next year we should explore a full time Technology teacher and full time Librarian at NBHS. She also requested a copy of the classes NBHS students would like to see implemented at NBHS.

January 22, 2004

Lisa Gagliardi questioned how many students take seven subjects each semester at NBHS as it might make more sense to have six subjects.

Dr. Wolfe stated he would rather see seven courses a semester as students could take classes that are not required.

Lisa Gagliardi questioned if there has been any research on emulating college schedules at the high school level.

Dr. Wolfe stated there have been some schools that have tried it but have moved away from this but it could be discussed more at a later date.

Dr. Wolfe stated our libraries need to become Library/Media Centers and he proposed to hire one librarian that will be shared by STW and JHS.

Kris Vanacore questioned if the library aides would stay at JHS and STW.

Dr. Wolfe stated they would because eventually STW and JHS will have a librarian and an aide at each library.

Dr. Wolfe mentioned that the increase in school psychology time and speech is strictly a function of student needs and requirements mandated through PPT's. He remarked that Speech and Hearing Services are a high shortage area and most difficult to fill.

Dr. Wolfe also spoke on unfunded liabilities, shortage areas, bus contract and health benefits buy-outs.

Dr. Wolfe mentioned the Capitol Budget Request for the 2004-2005 school year. He stated we have received a waiver until the summer of 2004 to connect the schools in Northford to the public water supply. He also mentioned the bleachers at NBHS, paving and curbing at STW and NBHS, and field improvements.

Lisa Gagliardi questioned if the paving and curbing would be done after the water lines are connected.

Dr. Wolfe stated this paving project would not start at STW until the water supply project is completed.

**VIII. Committee Reports**

1. Negotiations - Donald Winnicki stated negotiations would soon begin with the Secretaries Union.
2. Budget - . The Superintendent attached a copy of the January 1, 2004 financial report.

**MOTION:** Moved by Amy Norton and seconded by Lisa Gagliardi to add a Budget Workshop on Tuesday, February 10, 2004 at TVES at 7:00 p.m.

**ALL VOTED AYE 6-0**

3. Buildings & Grounds – Dr. Wolfe stated the Building Committee has accepted the Auditorium and it will be on the February Agenda for the Board of Education to accept.
4. Curriculum – No report at this time.
5. Pension – No report at this time.
6. Policy - The next policy meeting will be held at TVES on February 11, 2004 at 7:30 a.m.
7. ACES – Kris Vanacore stated that ACES will be receiving their budget in March and they discussed the audit at their last meeting. Penny Seaman asked if Kris could keep the Board informed on ACES Budget.
8. Strategic Planning – Dr. Wolfe stated the administrative team will be meeting on Monday, January 26, 2004 for their mid-year review.

9. Building Committee – No report at this time.
10. Calendar Committee – No report at this time.

#### **IX. Unfinished Business**

Lisa Gagliardi questioned why the new Middle School project wasn't included in the capital budget.

Dr. Wolfe stated the Town of North Branford would eventually have it in their budget.

#### **X. Visitors Comments**

Elizabeth Caplan noted that the Board has a huge, hard, difficult task in front of them but she implored the Board to move forward and do their homework on class sizes, academic improvements and adequate staffing.

Elaine Larson stated she was a strong proponent of block scheduling and hopes the Board finds a way to implement for the 2004-2005 school year. She also noted that many students take seven courses at NBHS and opposes going down to six courses.

Donna Mueller stated she supports the Board of Education and she has many concerns on class sizes and a challenging academic program.

Dee McKeown questioned why the Board of Education would have to assume responsibility to bring the water main down Route #22.

Dr. Wolfe stated maybe that cost would be shared with other businesses.

January 22, 2004

Grace Krom urged the Board to accept Dr. Wolfe's modest budget proposal.

**XI. Adjournment**

**MOTION:** Moved by Kris Vanacore and seconded by Lisa Gagliardi to adjourn this meeting of the North Branford Board of Education at 10:03 p.m.

**ALL VOTED AYE 6-0**

Respectfully submitted,

Sherry Ardine  
Secretary