

NORTH BRANFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION
August 17, 2004

The North Branford Board of Education met on Thursday, August 17, 2004 in the Totoket Valley Elementary Library Media Center at 6:10 p.m. The following members attended:

Board Chairperson:	Ron Haskins
Board Vice-Chairperson:	Cheryl Smith
Board Secretary:	Amy Sochocki-Norton
Board Members:	Lawrence Casey Lisa Gagliardi

Absent:	Kris Vanacore
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Superintendent of Schools:	Dr. Robert K. Wolfe
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MOTION: Moved by Lawrence Casey and seconded by Cheryl Smith to adjourn to Executive session at as per Section 1-225 of the Connecticut General Statutes as permitted by Section 1-200 (6) (a, b & c) of the Connecticut General Statutes to discuss personnel negotiations at 6:17 p.m.

ALL VOTED AYE

MOTION: Moved by Lawrence Casey and seconded by Lisa Gagliardi to adjourn to Public session at 7:00 p.m.

ALL VOTED AYE

I. Visitors

Director of Personnel/Business:	Donald Winnicki
Director of Curriculum/Instruction:	Joan Follo
Director of Special Services:	Suzanne Wright
Principals:	Dr. David Perry, NBHS Alan Davis, NBIS Nancy Brittingham, TVES

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Principals:

Robin Brown, JHS
Dr. Karen Johnson, STW

Marian O'Shea
Christine Imperato
Laura Pearson

Todd Stoeffler
Marcia Staffa
Rose Angeloni

Mark Fabrizi, NBFT
Louis Criscuolo
Joanne Wentworth

There were no visitor comments at this time.

II. Recognition

There was no recognition at this meeting.

III. Student Representative

The student representative was not present at this meeting.

IV. Approval of Previous Minutes

MOTION: Moved by Cheryl Smith and seconded by Amy Norton to approve the minutes of the July 15, 2004 Board of Education meeting with no corrections.

**ALL VOTED AYE
AMY NORTON ABSTAINED**

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V. Communications

Article: August 2, 2004 – Sport Illustrated
Re: “Losing the Leadership of our Classic Coaches”

Article: August 17, 2004
“Rell makes preschool for every state child a top priority”

Dr. Wolfe mentioned that Governor Jodie Rell and Education Commissioner Betty Sternberg wants the state to pay for preschool seats for every 3 and 4 year old in the state of Connecticut’s poorest districts and would eventually be expanded throughout the state.

Dr. Wolfe submitted several thank-you letters to the Board from various staff members.

VI. Superintendent’s Report

A. **Resignations**

Ms. Tracie Cavanaugh, health teacher at North Branford Intermediate School, has submitted her resignation effective July 31, 2004.

MOTION: Moved by Cheryl Smith and seconded by Lawrence Casey to accept the resignation of Ms. Tracie Cavanaugh, health teacher at North Branford Intermediate School, effective July 31, 2004 with regrets.

ALL VOTED AYE

Amy Norton replied that after reading Ms. Cavanaugh’s resignation letter she noticed that North Branford has lost several teachers to surrounding towns because of the higher pay scale in area towns. She mentioned that she hoped this would put an end to the criticisms that North Branford teachers’ salaries were too high.

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B. Appointments

The Superintendent has extended contracts to the following certified staff:

			<u>Year</u>	<u>Step</u>
Tom Jaqua	Science	NBHS	7 th Year	7
Richard Burke	Gr. 7 Science	NBIS	Masters	3
Jean Gresham	Gr. 3 Looping	TVES	Masters	2
Megan Schaffrath	Life Skills	STW/TVES	Masters	4
Kris Lindsay	Special Services Coordinator		7 th Year	4

The Superintendent under the authority granted at the July Board Meeting has appointed the above individuals.

A total of 22 positions have become vacant as of result of retirement and other resignations. These include out of state relocation and acceptance of employment in other school districts. In addition, one vacancy was due to an approved leave of absence. Of the 22 positions, 21 have been filled as of this writing. The remaining position is Intermediate School Health. Interviews were scheduled for this vacancy.

Dr. Wolfe mentioned that Alan Davis would be conducting interviews for this position on Friday, August 18, 2004.

Should the final position not be filled or other vacancies occur, it is requested that the authority to hire be extended from August 18, 2004 to September 15, 2004:

MOTION: Moved by Cheryl Smith and seconded by Lawrence Casey to extend the Superintendent's authority to hire certified staff during the period of August 18 through September 15, 2004.

ALL VOTED AYE

The Superintendent has received recommendations from NBHS, NBIS and from the Office of Curriculum and Instruction for 2004/2005 Department Chairs, Advisors and Coaches. Special thanks were extended to administration and the athletic director for their efforts in filling these positions. The Superintendent is pleased with the new personnel that will be guiding these activities. All of the positions are stipend in accordance with the contract between the North Branford Board of Education and the North Branford Federation of

Teachers. As such all appointments are renewed annually.

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MOTION: Moved by Cheryl Smith and seconded by Lawrence Casey to approve the attached lists of stipend positions for Department Chairs, Advisors, and Coaches as submitted for 2004/2005 school - year.

ALL VOTED AYE

C. Leaves – None at this time

D. Graduation 2004

MOTION: Moved by Cheryl Smith and seconded by Lawrence Casey to accept the gift of \$850.00 from the North Branford Touch-Down Club to purchase new football jerseys for the football team's away games with appreciation.

ALL VOTED AYE

Dr. Wolfe remarked that the club is doing a partial replacement of the away jerseys and they will remain the same color that North Branford is now using.

During Graduation 2004, which was held on June 21st, 143 seniors graduated from North Branford High School. Three students were lacking credits. During the summer of 2004, these students completed the requirements to receive their diplomas.

Superintendent Wolfe stated that North Branford had 100% of their high school students graduate this year.

Part of the Board of Education's Strategic Plan under Strategic Objectives is that 100% of our students will graduate and Dr. Wolfe commended the Board for establishing such a high standard and to members of our professional staff who have assisted students in accomplishing this goal.

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E. Enrollment

As of this writing, kindergarten enrollment is as follows:

STW 89
JHS 97

The Superintendent updated the Board on other grade levels stating that North Branford has very high-class sizes. He mentioned that the 2nd grades at STW and K, 2nd and 3rd grades at JHS are our trouble spots at this time.

Dr. Wolfe also mentioned that grade 4 class sizes at TVES are problematic and class sizes at NBIS are very high with a lack of space and staff. He mentioned the Board of Education would have to be very serious about addressing these issues.

Lisa Gagliardi asked that when class sizes are reported if the Board could see the exact numbers in the high school's Math and English classes especially in the B level courses.

Dr. Perry remarked that scheduling is still ongoing and he would have exact figures by the September Board meeting.

Amy Norton questioned if there was money to hire more teachers for the higher-class sizes and what financial resources we have left.

Dr. Wolfe stated that the savings we obtained from teacher turnover and in the health insurance account would be needed to cover this year's budget reduction. He mentioned that there might be some savings in the workers' compensation account.

Donald Winnicki remarked that the fuel oil bid came in quite high and we don't know how much electricity will rise.

Amy Norton questioned what Dr. Wolfe would suggest doing for now with the money we saved in various accounts to address instructional needs.

Dr. Wolfe remarked that if he thought he could fix this problem he would do it now and not delay but he would talk to his administrators as we have high-class sizes in all our schools. He mentioned that North Branford has the highest-class sizes in the shoreline area and there is no quick fix.

Lisa Gagliardi remarked that we have K-12 problems with staff and space and the Board has to get serious about attacking both issues. She questioned where we stood with NBIS

if a decision has been made to build new or renovate.

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Superintendent Wolfe mentioned that the Town Council has appointed a highly qualified firm for a second opinion on NBIS and to research the issues. He remarked that we would all need to make some very serious financial decisions.

Ron Haskins questioned if the Superintendent has any information on the trends of enrollment in area schools. He remarked that in the 1960's many towns shut down schools that weren't needed.

Dr. Wolfe stated he would be happy to provide trends in enrollment, as we do not want to under-build or over-build.

F. Summer Program

The Summer Program for 2004, "The Way It Works", was a huge success. A total of 1124 camping slots were filled during the nine-week program. The pilot lunch program as of this writing served over 1200 lunches.

Special thanks went to Nicki Brustman and Michelle Kronkaitis who were camp directors.

Leading the hit parade of camp favorites were:

Wet & Wild
Fishing Camp
Survival Camp
Dance Camp
Lego Camp
How the Universe Works
Cookies, Cakes & Pies

Superintendent Wolfe mentioned that plans for the Summer Program for 2005 "Greatest Arts on Earth" are underway.

G. Summer Professional Development

Dr. Wolfe was pleased to report to the Board of Education that considerable progress continues in training professional staff in two important initiatives: The Responsive Classroom and writing.

Within our Strategic Plan, Strategy #2, Plans #2 and #3 call for the training of all personnel on the practices of the Responsive Classroom to create a positive and consistent social

environment within our school district. Eight members of our staff received training this summer.

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Strategy #3, Plan #9 calls for the implementation of a uniform instructional model that teaches writing as a process in grades K-12. The Columbia Writing Project as well as the Connecticut Writing Project has been selected by the school system to meet this Plan.

Special thanks were given to the staff members who gave of their time and energy in making this commitment.

Joan Follo stated that 43 of our staff members are now trained in CT Writing Project and 31 staff members are now trained in the Columbia Writing Project.

Amy Norton questioned how many staff members were trained this summer in the Columbia Writing Project.

Joan Follo stated one staff member. She also mentioned that the Columbia Writing Project will run out their contracts and then will have their sessions in the state of New York.

Lawrence Casey questioned why and if it was because of money problems.

Joan Follo stated that it was partly money but also staffing problems.

H. World Language Evaluation Report & Proposal

The Superintendent provided the Board with the World Language Evaluation Report and its accompanying document entitled World Languages Program Proposal. This report is consistent with the Curriculum Management Cycle requirements. The Superintendent thanked members of the committee, which included:

NBHS Jennifer Marena, Department Chairperson
Marie D'Alessio
Jean Sunny

NBIS Carolyn Kramer
Edwina O'Neill

Joan Follo was present to answer any questions the Board had. The Superintendent called to the attention of the Board the specific recommendation for the expansion of world language opportunities to our elementary students. This recommendation is in keeping with State recommendations.

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Joan Follo remarked that the World Language evaluation process would now go to the World Language development process and the committee would be looking for a Board member to serve on the committee.

Lisa Gagliardi volunteered to serve on this committee.

Lisa Gagliardi questioned if a Foreign Language Honor Society could be added at North Branford High School as many area towns already have established this at their high schools'

Joan Follo remarked that this could be considered.

Cheryl Smith questioned if grants would be explored for the World Language program.

Joan Follo stated they would.

Ron Haskins questioned if we would be pulling students from their core subjects to study a language.

Joan Follo mentioned that World Language would be based around their curriculum and we now use Social Studies to teach culture. She stated that a World Language in the earlier grades would be an enhancement.

Amy Norton questioned if the Board could see the figures for World Language in three different ways: the ideal world, the realistic world and the worst-case scenario.

I. Board Goals 2004/2005

The Administrative team met on several occasions to discuss new initiatives for 2004/2005. These initiatives come from the Strategic Plan and become Board goals for 2004/2005. Attached were the recommended goals for the coming school year.

MOTION: Moved by Cheryl Smith and seconded by Lawrence Casey to accept the Action Steps as listed as Board goals for the 2004/2005 school year.

ALL VOTED AYE

Lisa Gagliardi mentioned that she did not want to approve anything that would pull funding from other programs.

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Dr. Wolfe mentioned that many of these goals stop short of implementing them as we acquire the information and make recommendations.

Amy Norton remarked that she is skeptical if we have enough manpower.

Dr. Wolfe stated many of these goals are ongoing and are related. We do not need thirty-nine committees to research them. He mentioned that the administrators and staff are very passionate about these goals.

Lisa Gagliardi questioned how many staff members this would impact, as she is concerned the staff will get burnt-out

Superintendent Wolfe mentioned that this is all voluntary and we do not coheres anyone to serve on these committees and these are manageable goals. He mentioned that the pool of volunteers includes teaching staff, custodians, parents, etc.

J. New Teacher Orientation

A comprehensive two-day New Teacher Orientation will be held on Wednesday, August 25th and Thursday, August 26th, for new teachers. New staff members will attend this in-service. The two-day agenda will feature an overview of the Strategic Plan and the Fish philosophy as well as workshops in exemplary teaching practices, classroom management, the teacher evaluation process, BEST program, special education, curriculum management, character education, technology, and language arts.

Each new staff member will be paired with a school buddy and also have the opportunity to meet with their building principal, tour the school and begin to establish their classroom.

Special thanks were extended to the entire administrative team and to the many faculty members who gave of their time and energy to be a “buddy” to the new employees.

Dr. Wolfe invited all Board of Education members to attend this orientation.

K. Opening Day for Employees

Opening Day for all faculty and staff is scheduled for Friday, August 27th. The Chair of the Board Education, Ron Haskins, President of the North Branford Federation of Teachers, Mark Fabrizi, and Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Robert K. Wolfe, will greet faculty and staff. The Superintendent’s address will include the honoring of employees for their

service, as well as Teacher of the Year.

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L. Professional Development Expo

As part of the Opening Day exercises professional staff members will have an opportunity to view the exemplary work done by colleagues during the 2003/2004 school year. The first Professional Development Expo will be held on Friday, August 27th, 2004 beginning at 12:45 p.m. in the High School gymnasium. Booths will highlight work in the four focus areas of professional development – Differentiated Instruction – Character Education – Technology Integration and Writing. Special thanks are extended to Joan Follo, Director of Curriculum & Instruction, and Grace Polivka, Professional Development Resource Person.

Dr. Wolfe mentioned that many vendors would attend including Anthem, BC/BS. He invited all Board member to attend any of these events.

M. Greatest Arts on Earth

The PAC in cooperation with the North Branford Public Schools will conduct activities during the 2004/2005 school year to raise funds for visiting artists in all five of our schools. This is in keeping with the Strategic Plan to obtain outside funding for the arts. The first endeavor will be bringing Cole Brothers Circus to the North Branford community on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, September 24th, 25th and 26th, 2004.

Amy Norton questioned where it would be held.

Superintendent Wolfe mentioned it would be held on the high school soccer field and no elephants were associated with this circus.

VII. Committee Reports

1. Negotiations

Dr. Wolfe remarked that negotiations are ongoing with the teachers' union.

2. Budget

MOTION: Moved by Cheryl Smith and seconded by Amy Norton to reduce the 2004/2005 Board of Education Budget Requests by an additional \$22,962. This will bring the Board's 2004/2005 Budget in alignment with the funding level authorized by the Town Council.

ALL VOTED AYE

The reduction came from the following areas:

111	-	Certified Salary	-	\$19,245
211	-	Medicare	-	\$ 1,502
213	-	Health Insurance	-	\$ 5,219
		Total Savings	-	\$22,962

3. Buildings & Grounds

Superintendent Wolfe stated that contracted services installed the water lines for STW and TVES up to the property lines and our staff and Public Works brought the lines to the schools.

Dr. Wolfe mentioned that the tile for the auditorium is enroute and should be installed soon.

4. Curriculum

No report at this time.

5. Pension

No report at this time.

6. Policy

The first reading of the following policies were provided to the Board:

Policy #P3011 – School Day

7. ACES

Dr. Wolfe mentioned that he received a letter from ACES asking for confirmation of a Board Representative and an alternate for the coming school year.

Ron Haskins stated that he would obtain the names for Dr. Wolfe, as he didn't know at this time if there would be a change in representatives.

8. Strategic Planning

No report at this time as it was covered earlier in the agenda

9. Building Committee

No report at this time.

10. Calendar Committee

Dr. Wolfe distributed the 2005 school calendar to Board members.

Amy Norton mentioned the great art work of various students in the Calendar.

11. Consolidation Committee

Cheryl Smith mentioned that efforts are being put forth to consolidate some purchasing such as copy paper and technology. She remarked the committee is exploring maintenance and general supplies.

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VIII. Unfinished Business

No unfinished business at this time.

The next regular Board of Education meeting is scheduled for September 16, 2004 at North Branford High School at 7:00 p.m.

MOTION: Moved by Cheryl Smith and seconded by Amy Norton to adjourn this Board of Education meeting at 8:25 p.m.

ALL VOTED AYE

Respectfully submitted,

Sherry Ardine