

NORTH BRANFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
September 16, 2004

The North Branford Board of Education met on Thursday, September 16, 2004 at the North Branford High School Cafeteria at 6:00 p.m. The following members attended:

Chairperson:	Ron Haskins
Vice-Chairperson:	Cheryl Smith
Secretary:	Amy Sochocki-Norton
Members:	Lawrence Casey Kris Vanacore

Superintendent of Schools:	Dr. Robert K. Wolfe
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Absent:	Lisa Gagliardi
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MOTION: Moved by Lawrence Casey and seconded by Kris Vanacore to adjourn to executive session 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 and negotiations.

ALL VOTED AYE
MOTION PASSED 5-0

MOTION: Moved by Kris Vanacore and seconded by Lawrence Casey to reconvene to public session at 6:55 p.m.

ALL VOTED AYE
MOTION PASSED 5-0

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

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Principals:

Nancy Brittingham, TVES
Robin Brown, JHS
Dr. Karen Johnson, STW

Michael Parisi, Sr.
Penny Seaman
Mark Fabrizi, NBFT
Christine Imperato
Kevin Whalen
Rich DeNardis
Shannon Pearson

Joseph Parisi
Shawn Savage
John Fiocelli, NBHS
Vincent Candelora
Lynn Jenkins
Diane DeNardis
Amanda Cottiero

Ann L. Parisi
Todd Stoeffler
Dan Borkowski, NBHS
Stephanie Bilskis
Elisabeth Caplan
Alyssa Merrick
Jen Falcigno

Mark Fabrizi, President of the North Branford Federation of Teachers, and Chair of the English Department- NBHS, stated he was pleased our CAPT scores were among the highest in our ERG and the increase our students made in the reading portion was the highest in the state. Mark remarked that it was difficult to say exactly why the scores increased as much as they did but it was easy to say that it was not because the Town of North Branford invested additional money into the educational system. Nor was it because teachers were given more time to work with students and prepare new, interesting learning activities.

He mentioned that each year the budget gets tighter and tighter but the teachers do not blame the Board of Education for the cuts. They know the Board has consistently requested and been denied adequate monies for the school system to grow and thrive. Mark remarked that although the Board does not have complete fiscal control they do have influence over the increasing obligations district teachers must fulfill. Each year teachers are given additional duties and responsibilities, yet none are removed. He stated teachers are tapped out attending meetings, sitting on committees, justifying their professional development activities and enduring the burdens of building initiatives in addition to their own professional goals. He asked the Board to consider the initiatives from the Strategic Action Plan and its impact on teachers in the district. (letter enclosed)

Penny Seaman questioned the Police Commission's cut to funding the seventh grade Dare program. She mentioned that all three of her children benefited from the Dare program and our school district should make it clear that this program is so important to our children. Penny remarked that as a community we have to decide where we want to put our funding. Mrs. Seaman mentioned that she is sure the Police Department is taxed but we must decide that educating our children not only from what the Board provides is important but also funding the education from the Police Department is critical to the well being of our children. Penny Seaman hopes we will unify to try and keep this program intact for all our students.

II. Recognition

1. Penny Seaman

The Board of Education recognized the distinguished service that former Board Member, Penny Seaman, gave to the children and Board of Education of North Branford. Penny served for over nine years on the Board. Over these many years she played a vital role on a number of Board sub-committees that included curriculum, policy and negotiations. The Superintendent took this opportunity to personally thank Penny for her extraordinary public service.

Dr. Wolfe remarked that one of the things he liked best about Penny Seaman was her great sense of humor that she brought to many difficult situations.

The officers of the Board of Education presented Penny Seaman with a bell, thanking her for her years of devotion to the Board.

Mrs. Seaman remarked that when she was asked to run for the Board of Education nine years ago she thought how could she with three young children. She was told that was all the more reason she should make a difference and serve on the Board. Penny remarked that she applauds all the Board members for all their time they give to the Board as this job is a difficult job and takes a lot of your time.

2. 2004/2005 District Calendar

At this meeting we had a number of exceptional artists whose artwork appears in the 2004-2005 school calendar. Each student was presented with a Certificate from the Board of Education for his or her efforts. These students were:

Connor Sullivan	JHS	Tara Melaccio	TVES
Brian Paradis	JHS	Alyssa Merrick	TVES
Mariana DelGaudio	JHS	Shannon Pearson	TVES
Kevin Sullivan	JHS	Staci Pavlinko	TVES
Alyssa DeNardis	JHS	Joseph Parisi	TVES
Nicholas Schneidt	STW	Paulina Pogorzelski	TVES
Jaimy Rippe	STW		

Special thanks was extended to art educators, Mrs. Nilda Gagliardi of Jerome Harrison School, Mrs. Alice Chittenden of Stanley T. Williams School and Ms. Shawn Savage of Totoket Valley Elementary School, for their assistance with this project.

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Dr. Wolfe mentioned that sixty pieces of artwork was submitted and thirteen were chosen for our thirteen-month calendar. Superintendent Wolfe remarked that we had a talented pool of artists and congratulated them and their families. Dr. Wolfe stated that Shannon Pearson's artwork was on the cover of the calendar and we would be framing it to hang in Central Office, with her permission.

The Sound Newspaper attended the meeting and took pictures of all artists attending this evening.

III. Student Representatives

Chair, Ron Haskins introduced the two NBHS student representatives, Jen Falcigno and Amanda Cottiero, to the Board of Education.

Jen Falcigno and Amanda Cottiero reported on the following:

Poet of the Year: Mark Fabrizi, English teacher NBHS, was chosen as a finalist in the Poet of the Year contest sponsored by the New England Association of Teachers of English. He will compete in Nashua, New Hampshire on October 29, 2004.

Miss Teen Connecticut: Laura Just, senior NBHS, was chosen as Miss Teen Connecticut She competed against fifty other girls and will represent Connecticut in California in November.

Senior Picnic: Dr. Perry will host the Senior Picnic on September 30, 2004 and he urges all seniors to work together and support each other to ensure a one-hundred percent graduation rate.

Senior Parent College Night: Program will we held on September 28, 2004 at 7:00 p.m.

CAPT Scholars: October 14, 2004 there will be a breakfast to honor all that scored at state goal on the CAPT. All students will be given a commemorative mouse pad.

CAPT Reception: There will be a reception for NBHS staff, administrative council and Board members on October 20, 2004 to celebrate the CAPT scores. All will receive a commemorative coffee mug especially designed for this occasion.

Homecoming: October 29, 2004 Homecoming game
October 30, 2004 Homecoming dance.

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Poetry Alive: October 25, 2004 a group of traveling performers will perform for our freshmen and middle-school students. These performers memorize several poems and theatrically perform them.

High School Web Site: Contains e-mail addresses of all teachers, homework sites, and Teacher of the Year profile.

Sports: Boys Soccer - defeated Westbrook 4-0
Volleyball – 2-0 – defeated Cromwell and Wilcox Tech.
Field Hockey and Girls Soccer will start this week
Football – game on Friday, October 17, 2004 against Stafford Springs.

Buick Open: Three NBHS students caddied for the pros at the Buick Open in August. Scott Andrekis and Josh Hagewood caddied and watched some of the greatest pros including Fred Couples and Nick Price. Kevin Galligan was positioned on the sidelines to hold up a “quiet” sign as the pros teed off and made their puts.

Shoreline Concert: On October 14, 2004 at 7:00 p.m. NBHS will host the annual Shoreline Music Concert in the auditorium. Admission is \$3.00 and all are encouraged to attend. The bands and choral groups from the ten Shoreline League schools will perform.

IV. Approval of Previous Minutes

MOTION: Moved by Cheryl Smith and seconded by Lawrence Casey to approve the minutes of the August 17, 2004 North Branford Board of Education meeting with no corrections.

**ALL VOTED AYE
KRIS VANACORE ABSTAINED
MOTION PASSED 4-0-1**

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V. Communications

- 1. Letter from:** State of Connecticut Dept. of Education
Sharon M. S. Fuller, Education Consultant – BEST Program
- Re:** Thank you letter to Dr. Karen Johnson thanking her for her participation as a portfolio scorer for the BEST Program.

Superintendent Wolfe thanked Dr. Karen Johnson for her commitment to the program and also acknowledged Nancy Brittingham's contributions to the Best Program.

V. Superintendent's Report

A. Resignations - None at this time.

B. Appointments

The Superintendent under the authority granted at the August Board meeting has appointed the following individual.

Nicole Esposito-LaCroix	NBIS	Health	Masters - Step 4
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C. Leaves – None at this time.

D. Around the Schools

9/24-26 PAC sponsored Cole Bros. Circus

JHS

9/21 Back to School Night – Kindergarten & Grade 1

9/22 Back to School Night – Grades 2 & 3

10/6-8 Scholastic Book Fair

10/12 PTO Meeting

10/15 Character Day

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STW

10/1 Parent Training for Paired Reading

10/4-8 Fire Prevention Week activities

10/15 STW Fall Festival

10/18-22 STW Book Fair

TVES

9/28 TVES Back to School Night, 7:00 PM

10/4-8 PTO Scholastic Book Fair

10/13 School Photos
TVES PTO, 7:00

10/21 Grade 4 field trip, Bridgeport Cabaret, "Phantom of the Opera"

NBIS

9/9 Back to School (grade 6)

9/14 Back to School (grade 7 & 8)

9/15-10/1 CMT administration 9/15-10/1

9/21 School Pictures **(Changed to November 8, 2004)** because of the CMT's

10/4 Progress Reports Issued

NBHS

9/28 Senior Parent Night 7:00 P.M., Café, Studio, Gym

10/1 Progress Reports

10/6 Shoreline Music Festival Rehearsals in Auditorium

10/9 SATs

10/14 Shoreline Music Festival 1-9 P.M., Auditorium

10/15 Yearbook Pictures

10/16 PSATs – NBHS 7:30-1:30

10/20 CAPT Reception, 3:00 P.M., NBHS Library

E. Enrollment

An enrollment was obtained at the close of the third school day, September 3, 2004 accounting for all in and out migration. A copy of the September 3rd enrollment was distributed for Board review showing that it provides for 2,517 pupils. We ended the 2003/2004 school year with 2,482 pupils. This is an increase of 35 students or 1.4%. This increase is consistent with past years that have shown slow but steady increases in the student population. An analysis of the enrollment shows large class sizes at every level in the school system.

The Superintendent distributed an up-to-date listing of classes that have more than 30 students in them at the high school.

Kris Vanacore questioned if we set a policy for the third grade class sizes and transferring JHS third grade students to TVES.

Dr. Wolfe stated we did not set a policy but one student from JHS was transferred to TVES.

F. SAGE Grant

We have received notification that North Branford will receive the SAGE Grant that provides elementary mental health services to Stanley T. Williams and Jerome Harrison schools. The total of this grant is \$15,770.

Superintendent Wolfe remarked that this grant was applied for at the last minute as the state alleged that the grant would not be funded for this year then changed their minds. The state is now indicating the SAGE Grant will not be funded for the 2005-2006 school year.

G. Strategic Plan

The Superintendent provided a copy of the 2004/2005 Strategic Planning Workbook to the Board. This workbook is based on the goals that the Board approved at the August 2004 meeting.

The core Strategic Planning committee will reconvene on October 7th and 8th with Facilitator, Dr. Howard Feddema. The core committee is made up of 30 individuals representing parents, students, faculty, staff, administration, elected and appointed officials, senior citizens and business leaders. The purpose of the update is to look at progress made to date and make any modifications as needed.

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The Board has two representatives on this committee. The Board must determine who will be their representatives. The meeting will take place in the Totoket Valley Elementary School Library with Thursday, October 7th, being an extended day. The same Board representatives must be in attendance both days.

Kris Vanacore, original member, and Lisa Gagliardi volunteered to represent the Board of Education. Dr. Wolfe remarked that there are twenty returning members and ten new members on the Strategic Planning Team.

Dr. Wolfe distributed the Annual Superintendent's Report to all Board members. There are additional copies of this report in the Superintendent's office for the public.

H. CAPTs/CMTs

The 2004 CAPT results and the 2003 CMT results have been received by the school district. The CAPT results reflect the spring administration of last year. CMT results reflect fall administration of 2003. The results were not received until June 25th.

Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Joan Follo, provided analysis of these test results. On the CAPT tests, North Branford has moved near the top of the ERG and was the only school district in the State to show improvement among the top ten school districts on all four subtests.

Superintendent Wolfe stated he views the test as being important but we must understand they are only a snapshot in time. He mentioned the tests were very dated this year as the state had a new vendor and they ran into problems with the scoring.

Joan Follo stated we must look at our fourth grade math and eighth grade writing scores to see how they can be improved.

Joan extended her congratulations to our present eleventh grade students, our teachers and our administrators. This class scored above the state scores in all four areas of the CAPT and was the only town in Connecticut to do so.

Lawrence Casey offered his congratulations to all involved and also thanked the taxpayers who paid the freight. He questioned what is next.

Joan Follo stated that administrators would examine what works and continue doing it.

I. Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

The Superintendent provided the Board of Education copies of the Adequate Yearly Progress Results (AYP). These results are based on the 2004 CAPT as required under the No Child Left Behind Act. The data shows that North Branford has met the AYP targets for participation, mathematics and reading.

Superintendent Wolfe remarked that at some point in time North Branford and every town in Connecticut would fail the AYP due to the escalating requirements.

J. New Teacher Orientation

A comprehensive New Teacher Orientation was held on August 25th and 26th. A key component of the program was classroom management in-service. All participants gave the in-service high marks. They also identified that having an opportunity to tour their schools with a buddy and to meet administration was very helpful. Also included in the day's activities were technology training by Mr. Timothy Hartigan, Director of Technology, and a business orientation by Mr. Donald Winnicki, Director of Personnel and Business.

Dr. Wolfe thanked all the teachers who participated as buddies, the administrators and especially Joan Follo for chairing this orientation.

K. PD Expo

The first ever Professional Development Expo was held in the afternoon of August 27th. Nearly 46 faculty members shared their professional development expertise. There was a very positive reaction to the Expo with many participants commenting on the ability to informally share ideas.

Superintendent Wolfe thanked Joan Follo and Grace Polivka for their help in making this PD Expo successful.

L. Opening Day Ceremonies

The 2004 Opening Day Ceremonies for all faculty members was held in the North Branford Auditorium on Friday, August 27th. Board Chair, Ron Haskins, and North Branford Federation of Teachers' President, Mark Fabrizi, addressed the faculty. Mrs. Nikki Musco and Mr. Fran Merola were recipients of the Friends of Education Award. Mrs. Elisa Pannone and Mrs. Kathy Mezerewski received the Above and Beyond Award. Miss Marcella Ardine of NBIS was introduced as Teacher of the Year.

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The Superintendent's address included a pictorial review of the 2003/2004 school year.

Board members Mrs. Cheryl Smith and Mr. Larry Casey were also in attendance and assisted Chair, Ron Haskins, in the presentation of awards.

M. League of Women Voters

Dr. Wolfe acknowledged that the League of Women Voters donated the book Choosing the President 2004 to the NBHS library. Dr. Wolfe presented the book to Dr. Perry.

VI. Committee Reports

1. Negotiations

Cheryl Smith remarked that the Board is moving forward with the Secretaries' negotiations. She mentioned that Vinny Candelora has joined the meetings on the teachers' contract.

2. Budget

Cheryl Smith mentioned that the biggest concern with the budget at this time is the price of fuel oil.

3. Buildings & Grounds

No report at this time

4. Curriculum

Amy Norton mentioned she met with Joan Follo today and they looked at goals for the sub-committee and what's ahead for 2004-2005

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5. Pension

Kris Vanacore remarked that the Pension committee met on Tuesday, September 14, 2004. Lawrence Casey volunteered to be the alternate on the Pension Committee.

6. Policy

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

Policy #P3100 – Home Schooling
Policy #P3110 – Summer School

The following policies were provided to the Board for second reading:

Policy #P3011 – School Day
Policy #P3030 – Bilingual-Bicultural Education

MOTION: Moved by Cheryl Smith and seconded by Amy Norton to approve Policy #P3011 – School Day as submitted.

**ALL VOTED AYE
MOTION PASSED 5-0**

MOTION: Moved by Cheryl Smith and seconded by Amy Norton to approve Policy #P3030 – Bilingual-Bicultural Education as submitted.

**ALL VOTED AYE
MOTION PASSED 5-0**

7. ACES

Kris Vanacore stated that the ACES governing committee would be working on several new projects this year. She remarked that the CMT scores for ACES were low and needs improvement.

Kris remarked that it is difficult for ACES to consistently reach quorum at their monthly meetings since that number is 14 members of the 26 member district. ACES is asking to change the quorum from 14 to 11 members or 40% whichever is greater.
(Letter enclosed)

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MOTION: Moved by Kris Vanacore and seconded by Cheryl Smith to approve ACES request to change the quorum needed for a meeting from 14 members to 11 members or 40 % whichever is greater.

**ALL VOTED AYE
MOTION PASSED 5-0**

Ron Haskins questioned if ACES checked to see if this is legal.

Kris Vanacore stated they covered all bases and it is legal.

Amy Norton stated she is the alternate for Kris Vanacore and she has only had to cover two meetings in three years for Kris. She commended Kris for her dedication.

8. Strategic Planning

No report at this time.

9. Building Committee

Kris Vanacore mentioned that the committee met on Monday, October 13, 2004 and the lobby floor is in place except for two pieces of baseboard that is missing. She mentioned that the committee voted to release some of the money to ACTMAT but not all of it.

10. Calendar Committee

No report at this time.

11. Consolidation Committee

No report at this time.

VII. Unfinished Business

Superintendent Wolfe remarked that all bathrooms at North Branford High School are now open to the students.

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Dr. Perry mentioned that the changes made this summer in the lavatories have put a dent in student smoking at NBHS but has not eliminated smoking.

Dr. Wolfe stated only a small percentage of our students smoke and a Yale University study is being considered for students who continue to smoke.

Capital Improvements

Superintendent Wolfe remarked that city water has been installed at TVES and it will be online for STW next week

Donald Winnicki mentioned that John Florio and the Public Works crew have been outstanding and the amount of work they completed this summer was phenomenal. He mentioned that the job was done for one-half of what the Water Company would of charged us.

Dr. Wolfe stated that not only did the water lines have to be brought in but also water pressure on the pipes and joints from city water had to be dealt with.

Donald Winnicki remarked that we might have to bid the bleachers without the press box and we will have to face that issue in the near future.

Evaluation of Character Curriculum

Joan Follo mentioned the committee has identified ten areas to be developed but they must identify the three areas they want to work on this year.

Air Quality Control

Donald Winnicki stated he has received confirmation from the State Department of Public Health and they have set October 27, 2004 for a three-hour training session on Tools for Schools. Each school will have a team comprised of an administrator, custodian, nurse, teacher representative and a parent representative.

CAPT and CMT

Joan Follo stated test scores would go home to parents on Friday, September 17, 2004.

VIII. Visitors and Press

Penny Seaman stated that she heard that the parents group sponsoring the Circus has a different economic incentive for the sale of tickets then buying tickets at the door. She remarked that if this is the case she hopes it will be publicized because many people

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will buy their tickets at the gate.

Penny Seaman also remarked that signs should be posted on our fields with the rules for smoking, alcohol, heckling, etc.

Dr. Wolfe stated that a committee composed of Donald Winnicki, Todd Stoeffler and Christine Imperato investigated obtaining signs for the fields this summer and Fran Merola and his Public Works crew will post the signs.

Ron Haskins asked what signs were being posted.

Dr. Wolfe mentioned rules for the track, behavior expected of spectators, no alcohol, no smoking, no animals, no golfing, etc. He remarked that eight or ten different general signs would be posted soon.

Laura Pearson, Walnut Lane requested the Board not forget the Talented and Gifted Program that is not funded this year stating the children in this program are special needs children also. She hopes the Board will find funding for the program next year.

Joanne Wentworth requested that the Board formally send a letter to the Town Council stating that Lawrence Casey will be the alternate on the Pension Committee.

Lawrence Casey mentioned he visited all the schools on opening day and was impressed with the floors, classrooms, etc. He stated he enjoyed seeing such enthusiastic staff members. Mr. Casey also mentioned that various towns have had bus accidents and he asked that everyone slows down and watches out for school buses and children.

IX. Adjournment

MOTION: Moved by Lawrence Casey and seconded by Cheryl Smith to adjourn this meeting of the North Branford Board of Education at 8:27 p.m.

**ALL VOTED AYE
MOTION PASSED 5-0**

Respectfully submitted,

Sherry Ardine
Secretary