

NORTH BRANFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
January 20, 2005

The North Branford Board of Education met on Thursday, January 20, 2005 at Stanley T. Williams School at 6:10 p.m. The following members attended:

Board Chair:	Ron Haskins
Board Vice-Chair:	Cheryl Smith
Board Secretary:	Amy Sochocki-Norton
Board Member:	Lawrence Casey
Superintendent of Schools:	Dr. Robert K. Wolfe

Absent:	Lisa Gagliardi
	Bruce Wentworth

MOTION: Moved by Lawrence Casey and seconded by Cheryl Smith 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 security and personnel.

ALL VOTED AYE
MOTION PASSED 4-0

MOTION: Moved by Lawrence Casey and seconded by Cheryl Smith to reconvene to public session at 7:04 p.m.

ALL VOTED AYE

I. Visitors

Director of Business/Personnel:	Donald Winnicki
Director of Special Services:	Suzanne Wright
Director of Instruction/Curriculum:	Joan Follo
Principals:	Dr. David Perry, NBHS
	Alan Davis, NBIS
	Robin Brown, JHS
	Dr. Karen Johnson, STW

John Florio	Helena McKee	Margaret Hrabchak
Claudia Faughnan	Dolly Potter	Cliff Potter
Pat Cardoza	Jaime DeFelice	David McMahon
Lisa Fitch	Todd Stoeffler	Christine Imperato
Anna DeMatteo, New Haven Register		

No visitor comments at this time.

II. Recognition

There was no recognition at this meeting.

III. Student Representation

The two student representatives were studying for mid-term exams.

IV. Approval of Previous Minutes

MOTION: Moved by Cheryl Smith and seconded by Lawrence Casey to table the North Branford Board of Education minutes of December 16, 2004 for lack of a quorum.

ALL VOTED AYE
MOTION PASSED 4-0

V. Communications

The Superintendent provided the Board with the North Branford High School Winter Sport Schedule.

Dr. Wolfe distributed a thank-you note from Nikki Brustman, 6th grade teacher at NBIS and her husband. Dr. Wolfe mentioned Nikki and her husband adopted a baby girl.

VI. Superintendent's Report

A. Resignations

None at this time.

B. Appointments

None at this time.

C. Leaves

None at this time.

A. Around the Schools

STW

- 1/20 Coffee & Company with the Principal
- 2/2 PTO Meeting 7 p.m.
- 2/3 Kindergarten Registration for 2005/2006

JHS

- 1/13 Miss Baldino's class – field trip with Ross-Woodward School to the Eli Whitney Museum
- 1/18 Families-in-Training – Gym Time Day
- 1/25 Family Resource Center Advisory Committee meeting
- 2/3 Kindergarten Registration for 2005/2006
- 2/10 Miss Baldino's class – field trip with Ross Woodward School to The Children's Museum

TVES

- 1/21 Grade 3 Southwest Day
- 1/28 "Character Counts", a play presented by Mr. Dwyer's class & Mrs. LeVasseur's class, 10:00 a.m.
- 1/31 to
- 2/4 National Circus Project artists-in-residence program; assembly programs and grade 5 workshops
- 2/7 Playground fundraiser Read-a-Thon kickoff

NBIS

- 1/20 NBIS PTO 5:30
- 2/3 Report Cards Issues
- 2/4 GR 7&8-PTO Sponsored Dance
- 2/10 NBIS PTO 5:30

NBHS

- 1/22 SAT's
- 1/28 Student Council Semi-Formal 7 p.m.
- 2/1 8th Grade Parent Orientation 7 p.m.
- 2/4 Report Cards Issued
- 2/9 Senior Citizen Luncheon 12 noon

B. 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. The Superintendent provided a chart detailing the Project Choice placements by grade level. The Superintendent recommended continuation of the commitment as in the past – 26 seats. (attached)

MOTION: Moved by Cheryl Smith and seconded by Lawrence Casey that the Board of Education endorses Project Choice for the 2005/2006 school year and its continuation of 26 seats.

Cheryl Smith - Aye
Lawrence Casey – Aye
Ron Haskins - Aye
Amy Norton – Nay
MOTION PASSED 3-1

Amy Norton remarked that she felt the ninth grade classes were already too high in numbers and we shouldn't be adding more than two Project Choice students in ninth

January 20, 2005

grade.

Dr. Wolfe mentioned that Project Choice students start in first grade and continue on or students are added at the freshmen level. We are committed to these students once they start in first grade or grade nine.

Ron Haskins stated that two students wouldn't make that much of a difference.

Amy Norton stated that in her opinion two students would make a difference however slight.

Lawrence Casey questioned when the Board had to provide the numbers for Project Choice students.

Dr. Wolfe stated that in January we would have to know how many seats we were going to commit to Project Choice students.

Cheryl Smith stated she would leave the number at four students because of multiculturalism.

Amy Norton remarked that if we were talking about grade eleven she would agree but the numbers are already high for grade nine.

Ron Haskins mentioned he would support four students.

Amy Norton remarked that we are obligated to provide for North Branford students first.

Cheryl Smith mentioned that she felt diversity takes precedence over numbers especially at the high school level.

C. Strategic Planning Follow-up

A one-day follow up to the Strategic Planning Update held this past fall is scheduled for Friday, February 4, 2005 from 8:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. at the Totoket Valley Elementary School Media Center. The purpose of this update is to review the work of the new Action Plans/Steps and to provide Administration of the key Plans and Steps that the Core Strategic Planning Committee identifies for the 2005/2006 school year.

Attached is a list of all members of the Strategic Planning Core Committee. Dr. Howard Feddema will facilitate the session.

Superintendent Wolfe thanked Joan Follo and Dr. Karen Johnson for the great job they are doing as facilitators. He also mentioned that two-thirds of the committee members have been there from the beginning.

January 20, 2005

D. Proposed 2006 Board of Education Meeting Dates

The Superintendent provided the proposed 2006 Board of Education meeting dates for Board action.

MOTION: Moved by Cheryl Smith and seconded by Lawrence Casey to approve the 2006 Board of Education meeting dates as submitted.

**ALL VOTE AYE
MOTION PASSED 4-0**

Dr. Wolfe mentioned that a Board meeting would be held on the Thursday before Good Friday because the following week would be spring - break.

E. 2005/2006 Budget Proposal

The Superintendent provided the first opportunity for the Board of Education to review the operating budget proposal for the 2005/2006 school year. The Board will receive a recommended Capital Budget in the coming weeks.

In order to simplify a rather complex budget, and to make it easier to understand the Superintendent divided the budget into three component parts:

a. maintenance and program continuation

In order to maintain and continue existing programs, an increase of 4.97% or \$1,154,543.00 is required. Attached is a detailed spreadsheet that shows increases by budget category. Virtually every category has increased. The financial pressures on the school system are similar to those that every homeowner is experiencing in the areas of electricity, heating oil, transportation, maintenance and insurance. The Superintendent provided the back up for this spreadsheet at the Board meeting.

There are no new personnel in the development of the maintenance level program continuation spreadsheet.

b. pending teachers' contract

At press time, the Board of Education was scheduled to enter into binding arbitration with the North Branford Federation of Teachers on January 18th with a second date (if necessary) of January 25th. The arbitration panel was scheduled to hear last best offers

and has 20 days from the end of arbitration to render their decision. It is estimated that the teachers' contract will increase the bottom line of the school budget 3.33%. This includes both salary and fringe benefits. Ruling of the arbitrator could impact this number up or down depending on the decision. The 3.33% is simply a placeholder.

January 20, 2005

c. enrollment/program improvement

Enclosed for Board review was an enrollment spreadsheet that simply takes the October 1 enrollment and projects advancement of all students. Quite obviously retention and in and out migration will have a minor impact. The entering 9th grade numbers have been adjusted for the average number of students who enroll in private school. Reviewing this data indicates that the North Branford Public Schools will continue to grow at a slow but steady pace. The impact of this on-going growth is going to be felt most directly by third grade classrooms at TVES and JHS and in grade 7 at NBIS.

The Administrative Team has identified enrollment and programmatic needs and separated them into two categories. The highest priority items are depicted on the spreadsheet which totals 1.24% (\$287,191).

The remaining items (or priority 2 items) are enclosed on a second spreadsheet and total 5.75% (\$1,335,575). Every item on the second spreadsheet could be easily defended in order to achieve the objectives of the Strategic Plan.

The 1.24% in enrollment/program improvements is to offset the loss of a State grant and to otherwise deal strictly with difficult enrollment growth.

Project SAGE is a State funded early intervention program for elementary school students at STW and JHS requires \$15,496 to continue. This program was paid for by a State grant that was originally scheduled to lapse at the end of the 2003/2004 school year but was continued in the 11th hour for one additional year.

Personnel detailed on the spreadsheet includes two 3rd grade teachers, one at TVES and one at JHS, to deal with class size issues. There is a small increase in order to deliver physical education services at JHS.

The North Branford Public Schools continues to replace federal grant funding that was lost at the end of the 2003/2004 school year. A total of \$13,681 is required to add back one instructional aide. The Superintendent provided additional data on the NBSS data.

The remaining positions, 1.0 world language at NBIS, 1.0 special education at NBIS and a library aide at NBIS are essential for enrollment and programmatic needs. Enclosed was background and rationale information for all three positions.

January 20, 2005

Executive Summary:

The following components of the budget are listed:

a.	maintenance and program continuation	4.97%	\$1,154,543
b.	teachers' contract	3.33%	\$ 774,052
c.	enrollment	1.24%	\$ 287,191
		9.54%	\$2,215,786

These numbers are subject to change as the arbitration award is finalized.

Dr. Wolfe mentioned that last week the school system used over ten thousand gallons of fuel oil and fuel is expected to increase by eighteen per-cent next year. He also mentioned that the science kits our students use will increase from one-hundred dollars a kit to two hundred and nineteen dollars a kit. Electricity is expected to increase as well as fuel for buses.

Donald Winnicki remarked that Anthem will increase by 12.5%.

Dr. Wolfe mentioned that the Board pays over \$16,000 for a family plan and if this figure continues increasing that much every year the Board could be spending \$30,000 for a family plan in six years.

Dr. Wolfe remarked that the capital budget is not presented in this budget yet but would include bleachers, scoreboard, high-risk entry doors, etc.

Cheryl Smith questioned if numbers are high in the third grade and we have to add additional teachers if these teachers would then move up to fourth, fifth, etc.

Dr. Wolfe remarked that the Superintendent has the authority to assign teachers where they are most needed based on certification.

Superintendent Wolfe mentioned that the Board Chair, Ron Haskins, has written to the Town Council requesting a meeting on the Board of Education budget.

VII. Committee Reports

1. Negotiations

Cheryl Smith mentioned that the teachers' contract is in binding arbitration and the next meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 25, 2005

January 20, 2005

2. Budget

A copy of the January 1, 2005 financial report was distributed to the Board.

3. Buildings & Grounds

No report at this time.

4. Curriculum

Amy Norton remarked that she met with Joan Follo to review the curriculum in the development stage. She stated that new social studies books would have to be purchased.

Amy questioned if there would be a report on the Alumni Day recently held at the high school.

Dr. Perry stated a report would be given at the February meeting.

5. Pension

No report at this time.

6. Policy

No report at this time.

7. ACES

Cheryl Smith reported that insurance costs for ACES is increasing nineteen per-cent and they held discussion on enrollment for Magnet Schools at their last meeting.

8. Strategic Planning

No report at this time.

9. Building Committee

No report at this time.

10. Calendar Committee

No report at this time.

January 20, 2005

VII. Unfinished Business

No unfinished business at this time.

VIII. Visitors and Press

Lisa Fitch questioned if the Board employed anyone to research and apply on behalf of the school system for various grants.

Dr. Wolfe remarked that grants are written and applied for by various staff members and no staff member is employed to research grants by the Board.

The next regular Board of Education meeting is scheduled for February 10, 2005 at Totoket Valley Elementary School at 7:00 p.m.

IX. Adjournment

MOTION: Moved by Lawrence Casey and seconded by Amy Norton to adjourn this Board of Education meeting at 8:12 p.m.

**ALL VOTED AYE
MOTION PASSED 4-0**

Respectfully submitted,

Sherry Ardine
Account Clerk