

NORTH BRANFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

February 10, 2005

The North Branford Board of Education met on Thursday, February 10, 2005 in the Totoket Valley Elementary School Library Media Center at 6:05 p.m. The following members attended:

Board Chair: Ron Haskins
Board Vice-Chair: Cheryl Smith
Board Members: Lawrence Casey
Lisa Gagliardi
Bruce Wentworth

Superintendent of Schools: Dr. Robert K. Wolfe

Absent: Amy Sochocki-Norton

MOTION: Moved by Lawrence Casey and seconded by Bruce Wentworth to adjourn to executive session as per Section 1-25 of the Connecticut General Statutes as permitted by Section 1-200 (6) (a, b & C) of the Connecticut General Statutes to discuss personnel issues.

ALL VOTED AYE

MOTION: Moved by Lawrence Casey and seconded by Lisa Gagliardi to reconvene to public session at 6:46 p.m.

ALL VOTED AYE

I. Visitors

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

Todd Stoeffler	Penny Seaman	Amanda Cottiero
Jennifer Falcigno	Dolly Potter	Cliff Potter
Deb Welton	Jim Dwyer	MaryEllen DiLella
Stephanie Bilskis	Tony Gerardi	

Visitor Comments:

Cliff Potter spoke of the February 8th meeting with the Town Council regarding the middle school. He commended the Board on their explanation of the need for a new middle school versus the renovation options. He hopes that the Town will decide to build new

rather than renovate because it will be a smoother transition and take less time than renovating the existing building. There will be less disruption to the students which is the important issue.

II. RECOGNITION

None at this time.

III. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

Amanda Cottiero reported on the winter sports season. The girls' basketball team has a record of 11-4, boys basketball has a 7-10 record, and the hockey team recently defeated North Haven to improve their record to 14-2.

The Quebec trip is planned for March 4-6. 44 students will attend the trip accompanied by World Language Teacher Mrs. Sunny.

The Drama Club will present "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum" with a dress rehearsal on March 31 and 3 performances on April 1st and 2nd.

Jennifer Falcigno reported that on March 9th, a luncheon will be held for the Senior Citizens of North Branford at NBHS prepared by the Food Service class. The theme for the luncheon will be St. Patrick's Day and lunch will consist of Corned Beef which will be donated and cooked by the Cafeteria staff.

CAPT testing begins on March 28 but the sophomores will be conducting their experiments on March 10th.

In November, a group of Creative Learning students along with their advisor, Mrs. Genzano, took a trip to the United Nations and visited the Mexican Embassy. They spoke with the Mexican Ambassador on preemptive use of force and other important issues. The students then wrote essays on their solutions to issues such as world poverty, outsourcing, and preemptive use of force in Mexico and the Dominican Republic. These students traveled to Hartford last week for a debate on these issues.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: Moved by Cheryl Smith and seconded by Lisa Gagliardi to approve the minutes of the December 16, 2004 minutes as submitted.

Ron Haskins – Yes

Cheryl Smith – Yes

Lisa Gagliardi – Yes

Bruce Wentworth - Yes

Lawrence Casey abstained.

MOTION PASSED 4-0-1

MOTION: Moved by Cheryl Smith and seconded by Lawrence Casey to approve the minutes of the January 20, 2005 minutes as submitted.

Ron Haskins – Yes
Cheryl Smith – Yes
Lawrence Casey - Yes
Lisa Gagliardi and Bruce Wentworth abstained.
MOTION PASSED 3-0-2

MOTION: Moved by Cheryl Smith and seconded by Bruce Wentworth to approve the minutes of the January 25, 2005 budget meeting as submitted.

ALL VOTED AYE
MOTION PASSED 5-0

V. COMMUNICATIONS

The Superintendent included copies of two Position Papers from the Connecticut State Board of Education.

Position Statement on Educational Technology and Information Literacy
(Adopted December 1, 2004)
EXHIBIT A

Position Statement on Infants, Toddlers and Their Families
(Adopted January 5, 2005)
EXHIBIT B

Dr. Wolfe also included a copy of the high school Program of Studies and an after school program at TVES.

Lisa Gagliardi questioned whether our Family Resource Center helps to support the development of programs and services for infants, toddlers and their families.

Dr. Wolfe stated they do. Also, special education has a responsibility for children from age 3 and up.

VI. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

A. Resignations

The Superintendent has received notification that Mr. Richard Geremia has resigned as the Head Boys' Soccer Coach at North Branford High School. Rick has served in this capacity for 7 years, during the last four seasons the boys' team has reached the finals in the State Championships bringing home the title in the last two. No action is necessary by the Board as this is a point of information only.

The Superintendent has received notification that Ms. Marguerite Luciani, grade 8 science teacher at North Branford Intermediate School, has submitted her resignation effective February 27th, 2005. Dr. Wolfe stated that administration has asked that this date be extended to March 4th as we have a right to hold someone for 30 days.

MOTION: Moved by Cheryl Smith and seconded by Lawrence Casey to accept the resignation of Ms. Marguerite Luciani, grade 8 science teacher at North Branford Intermediate School, effective March 4th, 2005 with regrets.

ALL VOTED AYE
MOTION PASSED 5-0

B. Appointments

Dr. Wolfe stated that a stipend position at the high school has opened and a recommendation was received by the high school principal and the athletic director to appoint Ms. Tara Bowers at the new fencing coach effective immediately. Ms. Bowers was the assistant coach in Guilford.

MOTION: Moved by Cheryl Smith and seconded by Bruce Wentworth to appoint Ms. Tara Bowers to the position of fencing coach at NBHS.

ALL VOTED AYE
MOTION PASSED 5-0

C. Leaves - None at this time.

D. Around the Schools

STW

2/21	Gr. 1 Teachers-Slingerland Professional Development
3/2	7:00 PTO meeting; Dr. Seuss' Birthday; Read Across America
3/7	Kindergarten Teachers' Annual Conference
3/9	Gr. 1 Teacher Math Inservice
3/11	Report Cards Issued
3/14-18	Preschool Screening Week
3/16	STW Friends Love To Read Day

JHS

2/10	Miss Baldino's class – field trip with Ross-Woodward School to the Children's Museum
2/10-28	Read-A-Thon
2/22	Families-in-Training – PreSchool Gym Time Day
3/5	Pancake Breakfast
3/8	PTO Meeting
3/11	Report Cards Issued

TVES

Playground Fundraiser Read-a-Thon - through March 4

3/3 Begin Spring Session After School Enrichment program
3/11 Report Cards Issued
3/15 Evening Parent/Teacher conferences

NBIS

2/21 Yearbook Activity Photos
2/23 Writing Prompt Scoring – Training for New Teachers
2/24 Progress Reports Issued
3/2 Read Across America Day
3/4 PTO Concert in Auditorium Feating *ESCHELLON AND VAGUE DETAILS*
(7:30-9:00)
3/9-10 Cyd Slotteroff – PTO Diversity Program for 7TH Grade Students
3/11 6TH Grade Activity Night (6:00-8:00)
3/15 Brian Gillie – History of Rock & Roll – PTO Sponsored – for 7th & 8th Grade Students
3/17 PTO Meeting (5:30-6:30)
3/18 50'S Dance for 8th Grade Students (7:00-9:00)

NBHS

2/4 Report Cards issued
2/7-11 Lollipop sale for Cystic Fibrosis, Student Council
2/21 CAPT science performance task begins
3/3 Junior Seminar 8 AM, auditorium
3/3-6 French Classes - Trip to Canada
3/9 Senior Citizens Luncheon, National Honor Society
3/12 SATs

E. Project Graduation

High School administration has received a suggestion from several parents who are actively involved in Project Graduation 2005 to fundamentally change the financial structure of the post graduation party. Currently, seniors pay \$25 toward project graduation with all remaining financial resources being raised through fundraising and donations.

The suggestion is to increase dues to include \$25 per year for a total of a \$100 contribution toward the funding of project graduation. This agenda item will give the Board of Education an opportunity to discuss this shift in financial support and to considerably lessen the reliance on fundraising by a small group of parents.

Details would be developed by administration to accommodate those students that do not

have the ability to pay and to address issues related to in and out migration of students during the four year period of high school.

All monies collected under a new financial structure would have to be accounted for in the Student Activity Account.

Dr. Wolfe explained that the current freshman class has a credit for dues from the 8th grade trip.

He stated that over \$17,000 dollars is raised through fundraisers each year to supplement the \$25,000 to \$30,000 needed to fund Project Graduation.

Cheryl Smith asked why Project Graduation is so expensive?

Lisa Gagliardi discussed the costs involved in producing Project Graduation each year and where the money comes from each year. She stated that all students receive a goody bag filled with items either purchased or donated.

She stated that even with the \$25 per year that would be paid by students there would still need one or two fundraisers to make up the difference in the costs.

She questioned whether staff would be responsible for monitoring the funds and if so, she would like to see a stipend given for their work.

Dr. Wolfe stated that staff would not be responsible, that Project Graduation is run by parents and volunteers and no stipends would be given.

Bruce Wentworth questioned who would be responsible for the disbursements. He asked if the money could be transferred from the student activity account to a separate Project Graduation account at the start of senior year so these disbursements can be made.

Mr. Winnicki stated that this could be done.

Lawrence Casey asked if the \$25 per year would be kept separate from the class dues.

David Perry stated that it would have to be identified separately.

Don Winnicki stated that subaccounts could be set up in the Student Activity account for Project Graduation funds.

Mr. Casey asked who writes the checks.

Lisa Gagliardi stated that Project Graduation has its own checkbook.

Ron Haskins asked what the current class dues were.

Dave Perry said \$25 per year.

Dr. Wolfe stated that the seniors already pay \$25 to attend Project Graduation and this would be an additional \$75 over three years.

Lisa Gagliardi stated that all students can attend even if they don't pay the \$25, however, they can't win a prize if they don't pay.

Dr. Perry stated that he would like to phase this plan in with the incoming freshman class (the current 8th grade).

Ron Haskins asked what Dr. Wolfe is looking for from the Board related to this.

Dr. Wolfe stated he wanted input and support from the Board and that this plan is still being developed.

F. Adequate Yearly Progress Status – 2002/2003 SY

The North Branford Public Schools has received its 2002/2003 Adequate Yearly Progress Status. North Branford achieved the level required by the federal government. This is based on the 2003 Connecticut Mastery Test results obtained in 2002/2003 and the spring 2003 Connecticut Academic Performance Test. **EXHIBIT D**

Dr. Wolfe stated that by the year 2010 or 2011, these results may include handicapped students and we may see a drop in results.

G. Strategic Planning

The Strategic Planning Core Committee met on February 4th, 2005 with facilitator Dr. Howard Feddema. Two major goals were established for the update - a review of the new Action Steps and a discussion of Action Steps which would be considered a priority listing. These items were presented to administration who will further refine the list and make recommendations to the Board of Education. Once established the Action Steps actually become the Board's goals for the following year. The Superintendent and Board Members who were on the Core Committee were available to answer any questions. Dr. Wolfe stated that the Board must establish goals each year by state statutes. He thanked all those who were involved in planning the Strategic Planning meeting.

H. Educational Specifications – North Branford Middle School

Dr. Wolfe provided an update on the joint meeting held between the Board of Education and the Town Council which discussed the Educational Specifications for the North Branford Middle School. Dr. Wolfe stated that these specs needed to be updated because they were 2 years old and technology has changed. He stated that the IT team and administration will meet on Friday, Feb. 11 to discuss these changes and bring their results back to the Board at the March meeting for action.

I. Superintendent's 2005/2006 Budget Proposal

The Board had a further opportunity to discuss the operating budget as well as the capital budget for 2005/2006 school year.

The Board has also set Thursday, February 24th, as a Special Meeting to discuss and take action on the 2005/2006 budgets.

Dr. Wolfe stated that there are still gaps to be filled in such as the teacher's contract

award. The request has been revised further and is now at 8.95% increase. This includes the fixed costs of 5%, 1.2% for new personnel and the teachers' contract which is in arbitration. This is down from 9.5% which has been adjusted due to a reduction in health benefits costs. He expects that when the arbitration award comes back, this number could be further reduced and asked that the Board wait until then to act on anything. The arbitration award has to come in 20 days from Feb. 4th.

A question was asked previously if our liability insurance would come down if we completed the bleacher project and the answer is no.

Dr. Wolfe stated that there are a number of increases expected next school year which will affect the budget. These include a 10% increase in UI costs, 15% in Wallingford Electric, Workers' Compensation rates are expected to increase by 22%, property insurance could go up 10 or more percent. He is hoping that we can maintain the new personnel included in the budget

Lisa Gagliardi asked if the arbitrators could render their decision earlier than the 20 days.

Dr. Wolfe stated yes, they could.

Lisa Gagliardi asked how they communicate their decision.

Dr. Wolfe stated that the arbitrators communicate their decision to the attorneys involved and immediately inform the Board by fax.

Ron Haskins asked that the Board wait to discuss the budget until after the decision on the teachers' contract has been received.

Bob Wolfe asked that board members email their questions to him or Don Winnicki so the answers can go to the entire board at the next meeting. He also thanked Don for all his work on the budget preparations.

VII. Committee Reports

1. Negotiations

The status of current negotiations between the North Branford Board of Education and the North Branford Federation of Teachers was covered previously.

2. Budget

Enclosed is a copy of the February 1, 2005 financial report. **EXHIBIT E**

Cheryl Smith noted that the committee met on Tuesday and there were only two items that were over on this year's budget. They were septic at TVES and textbooks but we should be done with these expenses by now so they shouldn't be a problem.

3. Buildings & Grounds
4. Curriculum – No meeting was held.
5. Pension

Larry Casey stated that the Pension Committee met and acted on a request from one employee and heard from the financial advisor regarding the pension funds that are invested on behalf of town employees. He asked that a letter be sent to the Town Council stating that he is the Board representative and that an alternate is needed for the Pension Committee.

Dr. Wolfe stated a letter was sent previously.

Mr. Casey stated that the Town has him as the alternate.

Cheryl Smith asked for a volunteer to be the alternate. Ron Haskins volunteered.

6. Policy - No meeting this month but one is needed in March.

Dr. Wolfe stated a meeting is being set up with the Board Attorney.

7. ACES

8. Strategic Planning – discussed earlier in Superintendent's Report

9. Building Committee – covered earlier. The Building Committee is on hold until the middle school project gets underway.

10. Calendar Committee – Not present.

XIII. Unfinished Business

Visitors and Press

Penny Seaman thanked Dr. Perry and Chris Webster for acting quickly to replace the fencing coach. Fencing is a new program and 13 athletes currently are participating in the sport.

She also thanked the Board for approving the administration's request to fund Project Graduation in a way that will more fairly spread the funds needed to support this drug and alcohol free alternative to parties for graduating seniors. She stated that the success of this program depends on the ability to attract the students.

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be held on March 17, 2005 at NBIS at 7:00 p.m.

XIV. Adjournment

MOTION: Moved by Lawrence Casey and seconded by Lisa Gagliardi to adjourn this meeting of the North Branford Board of Education at 7:40 p.m.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Coughlin