

**NORTH BRANFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
March 17, 2005**

I. Call Meeting to order at 6:04 p.m. in the Cafeteria at the North Branford Intermediate School on Thursday, March 17, 2005.

II. Roll Call

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

Superintendent of Schools: Dr. Robert K. Wolfe

III. Vote 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.

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 security and personnel issues.

ALL VOTED AYE

MOTION: Moved by Bruce Wentworth and seconded by Cheryl Smith to reconvene to public session at 7:00 p.m.

IV. Reconvene to the Cafeteria for Public Session at 7:00 p.m.

V. Salute to the Flag

VI. Visitors

Joan Follo	Mark Fabrizi – NBFT	Art Hausman
AA Hausman	R Hausman	Scott Hausman
Val Mirabella	Shawn LaCerva	Flo Pimer
Kristyn Narrace	Al & Suzanne Teixeira	Marcie Scalia
Frank McCarthy	Maureen McCarthy	Dolly Potter
Debra Stone	Vincent Candelora	Lisa Albert
Joan Czarkonski	Regina Marnanni	Lisa Comcovich
Tom Comcovich	Linda A. Guard	Grace Polivka
Lynne Testa	Emilio Marotta	Diane Marotta

Shawn MacDonald	Desiree MacDonald	Carmen Ferreira
Michael Pollio	Michelle Cook	Marilyn Mesner
Kathy Castillo	James Dwyer	Lori A. Bogue
Michelle DiMaggio	Mary Ellen Barrett	Claudia Faughnan, STW
Susan Pisner	Mike Mezerewski	Sherly M. Cuttai
Kate Fleming STW	Patti Darraugh STW	Carolyn Kramer NBIS
Janice DeAngelo	Vivian Caturano	Linda Gleason
Jim Gleason	Shelby Carlo	Martin Carlo
Deborah Albino	Lisa Flannery	Barb Viglione
Kim Lovelace	Mary Ellen Hart	

Mary Ellen Hart spoke on behalf of SWT staff concerning Desiree MacDonald, teacher at STW. “Desiree McDonald is a very talented teacher who challenges her students. Mrs. MacDonald is always there late and always there for her students no matter what time of day or night it is. The parents and children of her class can also count on her. Mrs. MacDonald is a very energetic teacher.” Cannot believe her contract will not be renewed. Staff at STW, family and her students believe this is a big mistake.

Janice Vergotti, a parent who has children in STW and TVES and on behalf of the PTO, Mrs. MacDonald is an outstanding teacher who cannot be replaced. I believe the BOE is making a big mistake not renewing her contract. Mrs. MacDonald is a passionate teacher, who is well respected by all.

Lisa Albert, parent of children in STW and NBIS. Mrs. MacDonald is a respectful, loving teacher. Mrs. MacDonald is a young teacher with many skills, Mrs. MacDonald teaches more than the ABC’s, Mrs. MacDonald teaches our children to respect, love and care for one another. Mrs. MacDonald was there for my daughter more than in the classroom, when our house got hit by a car. Mrs. MacDonald was there through this terrible time, my daughter didn’t even realize what was going on due to the caring and loving of Mrs. MacDonald. When my daughter had scarlet fever, Mrs. MacDonald was there with homework and schoolwork for my daughter. She is more than a teacher, she is a wonderful person and I believe you should reconsider your decision about not renewing her contract. Get all the facts first before you decide.

Valerie Mirabella, parent has children in STW and TVES. Always there to help no matter when and what the task is. When I am there to make copies and the copier breaks down, I can always count on Mrs. MacDonald to be there to help. Other administrators at STW are always too busy to help me. This is very terrible that Mrs. MacDonald’s contract is not being renewed. Mrs. MacDonald is a very loving, caring person.

Lisa Comcovich, parent, has a second grader in Mrs. MacDonald’s class. I just found out an hour ago the fate of this wonderful, loving, caring teacher, Desiree MacDonald. This is a disgrace to our community and absolutely terrible. Our school system is unbelievable how it works. My son has succeeded in his schoolwork thanks to Desiree MacDonald. I feel you need more information before you make any decision on Desiree MacDonald’s future.

Tom Comcovish, parent, cannot believe what is happening to this wonderful teacher. It is a disgrace and appalls me that the BOE is making a terrible mistake on such a wonderful person. I feel I am in her classroom everyday because she teaches my son so well and keeps the parents informed at all times.

Debra Stone, teacher at NBIS and parent whose daughter is in Mrs. Desiree MacDonald’s classroom. I have lived in this town for 30 years and cannot believe what is happening to this wonderful, caring, loving teacher. My daughter has Mrs. Desiree MacDonald and all I

can say is "God Bless her." My daughter is not the easiest child to teach but Mrs. MacDonald has a tough job taking care of my daughter and other special needs children. Please think about your decision about not renewing Mrs. MacDonald's contract. The Town will never have such a great, special, wonderful teacher again. We need to hold on to her. I speak as a parent and a fellow teacher.

VII. Recognition

Players, managers and coaches of the 2004 Class M State Championship Soccer Team were present to be recognized for an outstanding year. The boys' soccer team won the Shoreline Championship and completed an undefeated season (20-0-1) on route to winning the State Championship. This marked the fourth straight year of the Boys' team making it to the finals and the second straight year of capturing the championship. The Board of Education presented plaques to each member of the winning team and extended their congratulations.

VIII. Student Representative

NBHS Representative mentioned the following events are coming up:

3/28-4/4	CAPT Testing
4/1	Drama Production 7 PM
4/2	Drama Production Matinee 1 PM Evening Performance 7 PM

Also, congratulated Coach Geremia and the NBHS soccer team on the wonderful job in winning the State Championship again this year.

IX. Approval of Previous Minutes

February 1, 2005 - Second Budget
February 10, 2005 - Board of Education Meeting
February 24, 2005 - Special Meeting

MOTION: Moved by Cheryl Smith and seconded by Lawrence Casey to approve the minutes of the February 1, 2005 meeting with no corrections.

ALL VOTED AYE

Bruce Wentworth Abstained

MOTION PASSED 4-0-1

MOTION: Moved by Cheryl Smith and seconded by Lawrence Casey to approve the minutes of the February 10, 2005 meeting with correction from Lisa Gagliardi the sentence shall read "would **NOT** like to see a stipend given for their work" as stated in minutes "would like to see....."

ALL VOTED AYE

MOTION PASSED 5-0

MOTION: Moved by Cheryl Smith and seconded by Lawrence Casey to approve the minutes of the February 24, 2005 meeting with no corrections

ALL VOTED AYE

MOTION PASSED 5-0

IX. Communications

Letter from: State of Connecticut - Department of Education
Christine Sullivan - Project Leader, English Language Arts
Phil Freemer - Teacher-In-Residence, English Language Arts

Re: Thank you letter to Grace Polivka, grade 8 Language arts teacher, for her time and expertise given during the BEST February scoring session

XI. Superintendent's Report

A. Resignations

The Superintendent has received four (4) letters of resignation.

Mrs. Patricia Cochrane, grade 7 Social Studies teacher at North Branford Intermediate School has submitted her retirement resignation effective the end of the 2004/2005 school year after serving the school system for 18 years.

Motion: Moved by Cheryl Smith and seconded by Lawrence Casey to accept the resignation of Mrs. Patricia Cochrane, grade 7 Social Studies teacher at North Branford Immediate School, effective end of the 2004/2005 school year, with regrets.

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

Mrs. Constance Fedeyko, grade 7, Language Arts teacher at North Branford Intermediate School has submitted her retirement resignation effective the end of the 2004/2005 school year after serving the school system for 18 years.

Motion: Moved by Cheryl Smith and seconded by Lawrence Casey to accept the resignation of Mrs. Constance Fedeyko, grade 7, Language Arts teacher at North Branford Immediate School, effective end of the 2004/2005 school year, with regrets.

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

Mr. John Pryor, grade 10, History teacher at North Branford High School has submitted his resignation effective the end of the 2004/2005 school year.

Motion: Moved by Cheryl Smith and seconded by Lawrence Casey to accept the resignation of Mr. John Pryor, grade 10, History teacher at North Branford High School, effective end of the 2004/2005 school year, with regrets.

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

Ms. Antonietta D. Angelino, World Language teacher at North Branford High School has submitted her resignation effective the end of the 2004/2005 school.

Motion: Moved by Cheryl Smith and seconded by Lawrence Casey to accept the resignation of Mrs. Ms. Antonietta D. Angelino, World Language teacher at North Branford High School, effective end of the 2004/2005 school year, with regrets.

ALL VOTED: AYE
MOTION PASSED: 5-0

ADDENDUM TO SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – NONRENEWAL OF CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT OF MRS. DESIREE MACDONALD GRADE 2 TEACHER AT STANLEY T. WILLIAMS.

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

ALL VOTED AYE
LISA GAGLIARDI NAY
MOTION PASSED 4-1-0

B. Appointments

The Superintendent has received recommendations from administration for NBHS spring coaching positions.

MOTION: Cheryl Smith made a motion to approve the spring coaching staff as submitted by administration and seconded by Lawrence Casey.

ALL VOTED: AYE
MOTION PASSED: 5-0

The Superintendent has received a recommendation from administration for the appointment Mr. Richard Geremia to the position of North Branford High School Girls' Soccer coach for the 2005 season.

MOTION: Cheryl Smith moved to approve the spring coaching staff as submitted by administration and seconded by Lawrence Casey.

ALL VOTED AYE
MOTION PASSED 5-0

C. Leaves None at this time

D. Around the Schools

STW

3/22	Parent-Teacher Conferences
3/25	No School-Good Friday
3/29-30	Grade 1 Field Study-Garbage Museum
3/29	Gr. 1 & 2 Festival of the Arts (evening)
4/1 & 4	Author Nancy Wallace
4/12	Gr. 2 Family Fun Night

JHS

- 3/17 Grade 1 field trip to Bridgeport Cabaret Theatre
3/21 Miss Baldino's class will be visited by their Sister School partners from Ross-Woodward School.
3/29 Grade 2 & 3 "Festival of the Arts"
4/4 Cultural Arts Program – Crabgrass Puppet Theatre
4/7 Ms. Sandar's Grade 1 class visiting Evergreen Woods
4/12 PTO Meeting
(Calendar notation – Family Fun Night postponed from 4/7 to 4/27)

TVES

- 3/22 After School Enrichment program and Homework Club
3/29 After School Enrichment program and Homework Club
3/31 After School Enrichment program and Homework Club
4/5 After School Enrichment program and Homework Club
(rescheduled from Tuesday, March 8)
4/13 Courtyard and Beautification Committees - Spring Cleanup, 3:00 p.m.

(Calendar Notation - DARE Awards Assembly date CHANGED to Friday, May 20 at 11:30 a.m. instead of May 27)

NBIS

- 3/17 PTO Meeting (5:30-6:30)
3/18 50's Dance (Grade 8); 7-9 PM, PTO sponsored
3/31 Orientation for parents of incoming sixth graders (6:30-8)
4/1 PTO Dance (Grades 6, 7); 7-9:30
4/12 PTO Program (Holocaust) – Grade 8
4/13 PTO Program (Chariots of the Sun) -Grade 6
April 14 PTO Meeting (5:30-6:30)
April 14 Report cards issued

NBHS

- 3/22 Blood Drive 8 AM – 12:45
3/28-4/4 CAPT Testing
4/1 Drama Production 7 PM
4/2 Drama Production Matinee 1 PM
Evening Performance 7 PM
4/6 Magician 6:30 Auditorium. Performance to benefit Project Graduation

E. Kindergarten Enrollment

As of March 1st, STW has registered 83 students and JHS has registered 74 students against a projection of 190 students. This enrollment is slightly ahead of the projection for this time of year.

F. Summer of '05 - The Greatest Arts on Earth

Enclosed for the Board's review is a copy of the brochure for the Summer of '05. The central theme for the summer program is creative arts. A number of new art programs join returning favorites. Brochures were distributed to all North Branford students who are

eligible for the programs on February 28th. Registration for the program began on March 1st.

G. Alumni Return Day

Information was enclosed for review on the annual NBHS Alumni Return Day. This event was held on January 5, 2005. A total of 22 alumni attended this event. High School personnel are available to answer any questions the Board may have. Dr. David Perry mentioned the Alumni Return Day was another success. The alumni who returned are attending and taking courses as per planned when attending NBHS.

Snow Days

As of March 11th, 4 snow days have been utilized in the 04/05 school year. These days have been added to the end of the school year. The last day of school is now Wednesday, June 22nd. Any additional snow days are scheduled to come out of April vacation beginning with the Friday of vacation. The Board may add additional school days to the end of the school year if it so desires. If any days are added to the end of the school year, Administration recommends a maximum of two. Administration feels that the greater good would be served by adding two additional days at the end of the school year. This still would have an impact on those people (parent, students, faculty & staff) who have made plans for June based on a long-published schedule. In addition, the Board can establish in April the graduation date. State statute allows the Board to establish such a date after April 1st.

MOTION: Cheryl Smith moved the Board add two additional snow days to the end of the 04/05 school year, Thursday, June 23rd and Friday June 24th, if needed. If additional snow days are needed beyond the 24th of June, they will be taken from April vacation beginning with the Friday, seconded by Lawrence Casey.

ALL VOTED: AYE
MOTION PASSED: 5-0

H. Connecticut Mastery Test

Enclosed for Board review are the results from the fall administration of the Connecticut Mastery Tests (CMT's). It should be noted that the CMT's will be moved to the spring beginning in 2006. While the State has released individual system results, a comparison of communities has not yet been released. Note – the original date for the community data comparison has passed and no new release date has been announced.

It should be noted that North Branford is in compliance with State and Federal requirements that 100% of all students take the mastery test. No exclusions are allowed. Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Joan Follo, presented a report on the CMT's identifying both positive areas and areas for targeted growth.

Joan Follo discussed the importance of the Mastery Test and pointed out how and where North Branford is on the scheme of these tests.

I. Rotary Centennial Project

The Rotary has chosen as a Centennial Project the construction of a new concession stand and bathroom for the NBHS athletic complex. The new building will be located on

the southwestern corner of the football field. This will provide easy access for all sports. Rotarian, Vincent Candelora, was present to elaborate on the project. Board Vice Chair, Cheryl Smith, also a Rotarian, has been actively involved in the project.

Design information is enclosed for the Board's review. The block structure is slated for construction during the summer of 2005 with completion prior to the football season in 2005.

MOTION: Bruce Wentworth moved to approve the Centennial Project of the Rotary the construction of a concession/restroom facility for the NBHS athletic complex, seconded by Lawrence Casey.

ALL VOTED: AYE
CHERYL SMITH ABSTAINED
MOTION PASSED: 4-0-1

J. 2005/2006 Budget Schedule

The next critical date in the 2005/2006 budget process is April 5th. This is the date of the annual budget hearing. The Board of Education will make a presentation to the Town Council. This meeting has in the past been scheduled to take place in the Cafeteria of TVES.

K. Educational Specifications - Technology

Enclosed is a copy of a memorandum summarizing a discussion and recommendation from administration regarding technology specifications for the new middle school. Much has happened in the area of technology in the last 30 months, which allows for modification of the specifications. In simplest terms, wireless technology will allow for more in-class use. It is no longer necessary to dedicate a computer lab per grade level.

MOTION: Cheryl Smith moved to approve the modifications as stated in the March 17th memorandum on technology specifications for the new middle school and seconded by Lawrence Casey.

ALL VOTED: AYE
MOTION PASSED: 5-0

L. Adult Ed - Director Search

Jim Murray, the current Director of ERACE, will retire as of June 30th, 2005. Don Winnicki, Director of Personnel and Business and the Superintendent, Dr. Robert Wolfe had an opportunity to review applications and make recommendations for interviews. The Superintendent joined the Branford Superintendent in interviews on March 9th and March 17th. A recommendation will be made to the Branford Board of Education.

XII. Committee Reports

1. Negotiations

No report at this time.

2. Budget

Superintendent Wolfe submitted a copy of the December 1, 2004 financial report for the Board.

Donald Winnicki stated the Board would see a significant change in the energy cost line from last month's report as he encumbered the fuel oil portion on the line item.

Dr. Wolfe remarked that the next meeting of the budget sub-committee would be held at Town Hall, as there will be a presentation at the Town Council meeting at 7:00 p.m. from the architects on the middle school.

Superintendent Wolfe also mentioned that he has communicated with several area school superintendents and one of their main concerns is fuel oil. He remarked that fuel oil for the Wallingford School System will add \$300,000.00 to their budget.

3. Buildings & Grounds

No report at this time.

4. Curriculum

No report at this time.

5. Pension

No report at this time.

6. Policy

Scheduled for March 21, 2005 at 7:30 a.m. at TVES.

7. ACES

No report at this time.

8. Strategic Planning

Dr. Wolfe mentioned that the next Strategic Planning report on the update held in January is scheduled for the April meeting.

9. Building Committee

No report at this time.

Lisa Gagliardi mentioned that at the next Building Committee for the “new” Middle School if they can consider locating the cafeteria near the auditorium in order to serve refreshments while the auditorium is in use.

Bruce Wentworth will bring this suggestion at the next Building Committee – which are on hold at this time.

10. Calendar Committee

No report at this time.

XIII. Unfinished Business

No unfinished business at this time.

XIV. Visitors and Press

Patricia Darragh, Desiree MacDonald’s mentor. Mrs. MacDonald’s teaching abilities are of the highest standards. Mrs. MacDonald is a very energetic teacher and our school system will be at a great loss if Mrs. MacDonald’s contract is not renewed.

Vivian Catarni, parent, my son is a very tough child but has improved greatly thanks to Mrs. MacDonald.

Tom Comcovich, parent spoke earlier cannot believe you are following through with this. I cannot believe you are making a serious decision like this without knowing all the facts. This is a total disgrace.

Sherry Mattie, parent, my children looped first to second grade, Mrs. MacDonald is wonderful, and I am saddened with the way this town makes their choices and decisions.

You have a wonderful teacher here and you are going to give up one of the town’s best!

Lisa Albert, parent, I pay taxes here and cannot believe nothing can be done to help this teacher. I totally disapprove of your decision. Look at all the parents who are here to support Mrs. MacDonald.

Michelle DiMaggio, room mother and parent, I work with Mrs. MacDonald and cannot believe what is going on here. Look at all her support and just because of one person’s conflict with Mrs. MacDonald, you are not going to renew her contract. This is terrible. I will be more in touch with the Board of Education discussion from now on.

Marilyn Messner, parent, this is terrible and a disgrace to this town that you are making this terrible mistake.

Janice Vergotti, parent, my children had not had Mrs. MacDonald as a teacher but as a tutor. You cannot ask for anyone better, loving and caring. Mrs. MacDonald has gone beyond her job.

Valerie Mirabella, parent, how can you make a decision without all the facts. This is one sided.

Desiree MacDonald “Let it be said I **NOW** request a public hearing”

Claudia Faughnan, teacher at STW. In all the 29 years of teaching she has never be so saddened. I had Mrs. MacDonald when she was in kindergarten and now that she is, a teacher Mrs. MacDonald teaches me things. I have never knew anyone who is so dependable, Mrs. MacDonald always has a smile on her face which in returns the

children in her classroom also are always happy. Know the facts before you decide.

Debbie Albino, parent, a lot of us parents just found out about Mrs. MacDonald half-hour ago, it's unbelievable with just a short notice how many of us are here to support Mrs. MacDonald. I hope we will know in advance when the public hearing is because I am sure more parents will be here to support Mrs. MacDonald. The town really does not want to lose such as fabulous teacher.

Carmen Ferraro, parent, my children have never been excited about going to school or a teacher but that is not a problem with Mrs. MacDonald. When I received the call to attend this meeting, my son over heard that something was wrong with Mrs. MacDonald, and he said if she is not there to teach me, I will never go back to school.

Tom Comcovich, parent, I just wanted to say this is appalling and cannot believe this. I am very disappointed with our BOE and the school system.

Kim Lovelace, parent, at first I did not want my daughter to have Mrs. MacDonald but decided to keep her in Mrs. MacDonald classroom that was one of the best decisions I could have made. Mrs. MacDonald has taught my daughter, respect, self-esteem and how great school is. I want to thank Mrs. MacDonald for all she has done for my daughter.

Lisa Gagliardi, BOE member said she will look into all the facts before a decision will be made.

Bruce Wentworth remarked that the Board of Education would look at both sides.

XV. The next regular Board of Education meeting is scheduled for April 14, 2005 at Jerome Harrison School at 7:00 p.m.

XVI. Adjournment

MOTION: Moved by Cheryl Smith and seconded by Lawrence Casey to adjourn this meeting of the North Branford Board of Education at 8:54

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

Respectfully Submitted

Gina A. Cox
Sub-Clerk