

NORTH BRANFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

August 16, 2005

The August 16, 2005 North Branford Board of Education meeting was called to order at 5:14 p.m. in the Totoket Valley Multi-Media Center. The following members attended:

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

Absent:	Lawrence Casey
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Superintendent of Schools:	Dr. Robert K. Wolfe
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MOTION: Moved by Cheryl Smith and seconded by Marie Diamond 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 safety issues.

ALL VOTED AYE
MOTION PASSED 5-0

Attorney Marsha Moses joined executive session at 5:40 p.m.

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

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

I. Visitors

Director of Instruction/Curriculum:	Joan Follo
Director of Special Services:	Suzanne Wright
Principals:	Dr. David Perry, NBHS Alan Davis, NBIS Nancy Brittingham, TVES Robin Brown-Criscuolo, JHS

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Todd Stoeffler
Vincent Candlora
Elizabeth Siena
Carter Welch
Tom Comcowich

Nicole Shea
Cliff Potter
Marcia Staffa
Ashley Joiner
Mary Bigelow

Joanne Wentworth
Ron Siena
Marian O'Shea
Lisa Albert
Andrew Esposito

Tom Comcowich questioned what the time table would be before the Board of Education supplied answers to issues raised at other Board of Education meetings. Issues such as the no confidence vote, removal of a teacher and special education issues. He mentioned that we are now going into a new school year and these questions have not been answered.

Lisa Albert stated that she had responded to Ms. Smith regarding the letter Ms. Smith had published in the local papers. Ms. Albert remarked that it was her understanding that the petitions had not been provided to the Board in an adequate manner. If that is the case she would like to hear from Board members as to how the public should present petitions to them and questioned how the people could respond to the Board of Education to have a non-renewal of Dr. Wolfe's contract. She remarked that the no-confidence vote petitions, special education issues and administration issues should be looked into before Dr. Wolfe's contract is renewed. She asked Board members to contact her in writing if the petitions were not substantial.

II. Recognition

There was no recognition at this time.

III. Student Representative

There was no student representation at this time.

IV. Approval of Previous Minutes

MOTION: Moved by Cheryl Smith and seconded by Marie Diamond to approve the minutes of the July 26, 2005 Board of Education workshop with no corrections.

ALL VOTED AYE

MOTION PASSED 5-0

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MOTION: Moved by Cheryl Smith and seconded by Marie Diamond to approve the minutes of the July 26, 2005 North Branford Board of Education minutes with no corrections.

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

V. Communications

News Article: *Rell Backs Lawsuit by State*
Hartford Courant – July 26, 2005

Dr. Wolfe mentioned an article in the Connecticut News stating that Gov. Jodie Rell was backing the state in a lawsuit against the Federal Government in the No Child Left Behind Act. Dr. Wolfe mentioned that all Board's of Education have been requested to support the state's actions and he would prepare a brief for Board members. He would also distribute to them the names of the Board's of Education who are supporting the state's actions

Letter from: South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority
Kate S. Powell, Environmental Outreach Manager

Re: Congratulations letter to Carrie Sabetta for winning the South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority Science Teaching Award.

Dr. Wolfe congratulated Carrie Sabetta, Teacher at TVES, for this honor.

Letter from: **Dolly Potter, President Paraprofessionals Local #6152**

A letter thanking Board Members and the Superintendent for seeing the value of what

paraprofessionals do in providing support services to North Branford students. She thanked them for building the NBSS program and providing funding after government funding was lost.

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Dr. Wolfe distributed thank you notes to Board members from various staff members.

VI. Superintendent's Report

A. Resignations

Mr. Peter Bouley, social studies teacher at North Branford High School, has submitted his resignation effective immediately.

MOTION: Moved by Cheryl Smith and seconded by Lisa Gagliardi to accept the resignation of Mr. Peter Bouley, social studies teacher at North Branford High School, effective immediately with regrets.

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

Mr. Michael Stewart, English teacher at North Branford High School, has submitted his resignation effective immediately.

MOTION: Moved by Cheryl Smith and seconded by Lisa Gagliardi to accept the resignation of Mr. Michael Stewart, English teacher at North Branford High School, effective immediately with regrets.

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

Mrs. Amy Snow-Stewart, English teacher at North Branford High School, has submitted her resignation effective immediately.

MOTION: Moved by Cheryl Smith to accept the resignation of Mrs. Amy Snow-Stewart, English teacher at North Branford High School, effective immediately with regrets.

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

Amy Norton questioned if staff members were still given exit interviews.

Dr. Wolfe stated that there were exit interviews but two of these staff members left

without notification and we were unable to interview them, as we could not contact them.

Dr. Wolfe commended NBHS staff for the rapid speed in reviewing applications,
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conducting interviews and making recommendations to the Superintendent. Dr. Wolfe was most assured that all staff positions would be filled before the start of the new school year.

B. Appointments - None at this time.

C. Leaves – None at this time.

D. Summer Program

The 2005 Summer Program is in its final week of operation. As of this writing 1442 registrations were received making this summer the highest subscribed summer program. In addition, 1401 lunches were purchased. Popular programs included Wet & Wild, Candy Making, Bubblemania, and Survival. Plans are being developed for the 2006 season. Special thanks go to Michelle Kronkaitis and Nicki Brustman who are co-directors of the camp program, Nan Brittingham in whose school the camp presided and Central Office personnel, Terri Rienzo, Anna DeMatteo, Lisa Coughlin and Gail Pearson who all played essential roles in making this summer program successful.

Dr. Wolfe mentioned that next year's summer camp would be entitled "What Do You Collect".

E. Opening Day for Employees

A reminder that New Teacher Orientation will be held on August 25th and 26. New teachers will be greeted by Board Chair, Ron Haskins, and the Superintendent. All teachers will report for the opening convocation which will be held on Monday, August 29th. Board Chair, Ron Haskins, will again greet all employees. The theme for this year's convocation will be community service and is directly linked to the Strategic Plan.

F. Differentiated Instruction

The North Branford Public Schools has moved away from a pull-out model for gifted and talented students and moved to an inclusive model to meet all student needs. In order to make this transition, much time energy and effort has been given to the concept of Differentiated Instruction by regular classroom teachers. Differentiated Instruction is a

major component of the professional development plan. Joan Follo, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, provided a position statement entitled "Using Differentiation to Accommodate Academic Diversity in the Classroom." Mrs. Follo and building administration were available to answer any questions regarding this initiative.

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Dr. Wolfe remarked that our professional development plan centers around four basic themes: character education, integration of technology, writing across the curriculum and differentiated instruction.

Joan Follo stated that all students have access to higher learning. She remarked that education today is a tricky, complex balancing act. Joan stated that by accommodating academic diversity through differentiated instruction is the educational direction of the future. She mentioned that each child comes to school with varying levels of readiness to learn, different ways in which they learn best, and a wide range of interests.

Joan remarked that all North Branford public school teachers are required to learn and implement the practices of differentiated instruction. The Professional Growth Educator Evaluation Program identifies the major goals and initiatives that lay the foundation for professional development. Differentiated Instruction is having high expectations for all students and it is not a different lesson plan for each student each day. It gives students ways to learn and how to demonstrate what they learned with a teacher's guidance. Teachers provide multiple ways in which their students can learn.

Differentiation in math depends on the needs of the students. Teachers could pretest students and place them at the appropriate level of instruction for a particular unit. Teachers provide a variety of strategies to help students learn. Students may work in small groups that are selected by the teacher and at other times students may work with others who are at similar achievement level on a particular level.

Cheryl Smith remarked that with twenty-five students in a classroom teachers might be tempted to teach to the middle. She questioned how effective differentiation was to students identified as gifted and talented.

Joan Follo stated there are no statistics at this time but teachers are constantly making sure all students are learning. She stated that our advanced students could be accommodated with enrichment programs after school and advanced programs during the summer. Joan stated that the trick was to make sure the instructors teaching these programs have some understanding of differentiated instruction.

Marie Diamond questioned how much training was given to teachers for gifted students.

Joan Follo remarked that all our teachers were on a five-year plan to learn all areas: differentiation, technology, character education and writing across the curriculum and integrate them in their classrooms.

Dr. Wolfe stated North Branford purchases materials and uses outside consultants. We must make sure we have state of the art materials and competent consultants.

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Amy Norton stated that since the creative learning program was eliminated we must address these students and asked what was working to help these students.

Dr. Wolfe mentioned we have a variety of personnel who deal with the talented area: art, music, drama, world language, sports, etc. He remarked that teaching is not just in a classroom but in many areas.

Lisa Gagliardi questioned if we had the software to track students. She asked if we could keep on-line assessment portfolios.

Joan Follo stated this could be developed.

Dr. Perry mentioned that this would be the objective of Power School.

Dr. Wolfe mentioned that North Branford has a software program in place and many of our teachers are being trained in Power School.

Amy Norton asked where we want to go with this to help our gifted students.

Dr. Wolfe mentioned developing distance learning for Japanese, Chinese, etc., authentic learning with neighboring high schools and colleges, magnet schools, etc.

Cheryl Smith remarked that some gifted students could become bored and have behavioral problems and could require special needs. She stated that she hoped these students don't fall through the cracks.

Dr. Wolfe mentioned that we are required by the state to identify gifted students and have a plan in place.

Joan Follo offered to develop a presentation for PPO members, special interest groups, or any interested person on this matter.

G. East Shore Health

The Superintendent has received a request from the Director of East Shore Health that we enter into a Memorandum of Understanding regarding the Planning and Implementation of Emergency Mass Vaccination, Countermeasures and/or Point of Distribution for Medicines. Specifically East Shore Health has asked permission to utilize North Branford High School in the event that it is necessary to enter into a mass

distribution of medicine for North Branford residents.

The terms and conditions of such agreement are defined in the attached memorandum. It should be noted that in the event of such a distribution, the Public Health Agency has first rights under the state guidelines for the use of school buses. It is more than likely that if a mass distribution is required for a specific event that the Governor would close

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public schools. The high school would also be used as a staging area should a mass vaccination be required at the designated site – Branford High School.

MOTION: Moved by Cheryl Smith and seconded by Lisa Gagliardi to authorize the Superintendent of Schools to execute a Memorandum of Understanding with East Shore Health for the Purposes of Planning and Implementation of Emergency Mass Vaccination, Countermeasures and/or Point of Distribution for Medicines.

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

H. Staffing Update

As of August 10th, the following certified staff vacancies remain in the North Branford Public Schools:

1.0 World Language	NBIS
1.0 English	NBHS
1.0 English	NBHS
0.8 Social Studies	NBHS
0.6 Physical Education	TVES/JHS

Dr. Wolfe remarked we would soon be fully staffed at NBHS and NBIS but the physical education program would be more difficult to fill. He hopes to have this position filled soon as talks are ongoing with a highly qualified person to act as a substitute until this position is filled.

Amy Norton questioned if any grade level was being looked at day by day at this time.

Dr. Wolfe stated the next two weeks would tell. He also mentioned that no classrooms were available at TVES, STW or JHS. There are no empty rooms. He remarked we already added positions at TVES and JHS.

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I. Physical Education Curriculum Guide K-12

At the July 26, 2005 Board of Education meeting, the Physical Education Curriculum Guide K-12 was presented for first reading. At this meeting, the Board will have a second opportunity to discuss the new curriculum. The Superintendent extends his thanks to Joan Follo and members of the Committee.

MOTION: Moved by Cheryl Smith and seconded by Lisa Gagliardi to approve the Physical Education Curriculum Guide K-12 as submitted.

ALL VOTED AYE

Joan Follo thanked Carter Welch, Todd Stoeffler, Nancy Gray and Ralph Shaw for their help with this curriculum.

Lisa Gagliardi inquired if we were integrating special education students into our regular physical education classed.

Todd Stoeffler mentioned that the Life Skills students were attending regular physical education classes at NBHS.

J. Annual Report

One of the tasks completed at the Administrative Retreat on June 28th was to identify the significant accomplishments of the school district during the 2004/2005 school year. The Superintendent will provide the Board with advance information of the printed annual report. This report is required by State Statute.

Superintendent Wolfe remarked on a few items from the annual report : our CAPT scores are higher this year, our curriculum management cycle was completed this year, professional development is ongoing in responsive classroom, character education, visual learning program and redesigning the science consortium. He mentioned improved technology with our new voice mail system, increased communications with the Town Council, ninety percent of students continue with post graduate education plans, 14 communication awards in four years, Rotary Project of a concession stand, with thanks to

Vinny Candelora and all Rotary members calling this project a labor of love. Also mentioned were the accomplishments of our athletic teams, cultural activities with the help of our PPO's and proceeds from the circus. Dr. Wolfe thanked all administrators, directors, and supervisors who had a hand in developing the annual report.

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VI. Committee Reports

1. Negotiations

MOTION: Moved by Lisa Gagliardi and seconded by Amy Norton to present to the Board of Education the recommendation of the negotiation's sub-committee's recommendation of a 4% salary increase for the Superintendent's contract for the 2005-2006 school year.

MARIE DIAMOND – NAY

LISA GAGLIARDI – AYE

AMY NORTON – NAY

CHERYL SMITH – NAY

RON HASKINS – NAY

MOTION FAILED 1-4

Dr. Wolfe remarked that he thought this was premature to do this at this time as no agreement had been reached with the Superintendent.

Cheryl Smith remarked that she thought it was agreed that the Superintendent's contract would be postponed until October 2005.

Lisa Gagliardi stated the salary increase and the contract were two separate issues and not one in the same.

Amy Norton remarked she was at the sub-committee meeting and she felt they shouldn't be addressing this matter at this time. She felt she would like to make up her own mind and mentioned that what was mentioned in executive session should not be mentioned at this time. She remarked that there was no mutually agreed upon salary so she would like to wait and hear both sides.

Lisa Gagliardi remarked that the Board was diminishing the efforts of the negotiation sub-committee. She mentioned that this committee met three different nights to reach a

decision and Board members did not have to vote in favor of it. She questioned what was the point of a sub-committee if you don't allow them to bring forth their recommendations

Cheryl Smith stated she was a member of this committee and she wasn't prepared to

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to vote on the Superintendent's contract at this time.

2. Budget – No report at this time

3. Buildings & Grounds -

Cheryl Smith questioned the letter from Vinny Candlora on the scoreboard and the funding.

Dr. Wolfe remarked the buildings and grounds sub-committee should meet to hear the recommendations, concerns and means of funding, in the near future.

4. Curriculum – No report at this time.

5. Pension – No report at this time.

6. Policy

The second reading of the following policies is provided to the Board:

Policy #P7517 – Security

Policy #P7532 – Property Insurance

Policy #P7540 – Food Service

MOTION: Moved by Cheryl Smith and seconded by Marie Diamond to approve Policy #P7517 – Security as submitted.

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

MOTION: Moved by Cheryl Smith and seconded by Marie Diamond to approve Policy #P7532 – Property Insurance as submitted.

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

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MOTION: Moved by Cheryl Smith and seconded by Marie Diamond to approve Policy #P7540 – Food Service as submitted.

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

7. ACES

Amy Norton was appointed as alternate for ACES.

8. Strategic Planning – No report at this time.

9. Building Committee

Marie Diamond was appointed to the Building Committee

10. Calendar Committee

Amy Norton stated the 2006-2007 calendar was finalized.

11. Transportation/Bus Safety Committee

MOTION: Moved by Amy Norton and seconded by Cheryl Smith that the bus stop at the corner of Middletown Avenue and Mansfield Drive remain constant and not be changed.

**ALL VOTED AYE
LISA GAGLIARDI ABSTAINED
MOTION PASSED 4-0-1**

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VII. Unfinished Business

Marie Diamond was appointed as the third member of the Board budget subcommittee.

Lisa Gagliardi questioned how the range was established for unaffiliated employees.

Ron Haskins stated the negotiations subcommittee established it.

Lisa Gagliardi remarked that the research on the Ms. Brown and Ms. MacDonald matter should be put on next month's agenda.

Amy Norton remarked that if these matters were researched then specific issues must be addressed. She mentioned that the recent non-renewal this spring regards personnel and the Board is bound not to discuss the matter in public by a confidentiality clause.

Cheryl Smith remarked that the Board should ask for union representation, board representation and the Superintendent to meet and discuss issues on the no-confidence matter.

Lisa Gagliardi asked if the fee structures for the use of our facilities could be put on next month's agenda.

Amy Norton will attend the meetings of the Superintendent's Parent Advisory Committee and report back to the Board.

VIII. Visitors and Press

Lisa Albert stated she was ready to congratulate the Board but after tonight's meeting still sees the lack of communication between Board members. She remarked that all Board members should have a list ahead of time of unfinished business. Lisa mentioned that she hoped the matters of Ms Brown, special needs lawsuit and the no confidence of Karen Johnson and Dr. Wolfe would be on the next Board agenda. She also mentioned that the Board meeting of July, 2005 had no audio and she requested that questions from the public, to be answered under unfinished business, should be put on a list for public

access.

Tom Comcowich questioned on the matter of Ms. MacDonald who prepares the questions, the Board or the public.

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THE NEXT REGULAR BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR SEPTEMBER 15, 2005 AT NORTH BRANFORD HIGH SCHOOL AT 7:00 P.M.

MOTION: Moved by Cheryl Smith and seconded by Lisa Gagliardi to adjourn this meeting of the North Branford Board of Education at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sherry Ardine
Account Clerk