

**NORTH BRANFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
May 18, 2006**

The Thursday, May 18, 2006 meeting of the North Branford Board of Education was called to order at 6:10 p.m. in the Conference Room of Totoket Valley Elementary School. The following members attended:

Board Chairwoman:	Cheryl Smith
Board Vice-Chairwoman:	Bonnie Symansky
Board Secretary:	Marcey Onofrio
Board Members:	John Bozzuto, Jr. Elisabeth Caplan Ron Haskins

Superintendent of Schools: Dr. Robert K. Wolfe

MOTION: Moved by Ron Haskins and seconded by John Bozzuto 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, negotiations and legal issues.

ALL VOTED AYE

MOTION: Moved by Marcey Onofrio and seconded by Elisabeth Caplan to reconvene to the Totoket Valley Library Media Center for Public Session at 7:00 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 Robin Brown-Criscuolo, JHS Dr. Karen Johnson, STW

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Claudia Faughnan
Lynn Clark
Laura Sanzari
Richard Dryzgula
Rosset Cotter
David McMahan

Phil Palma, NBFT
Sue Bise
Christina Farland
Jeffrey Dryzgula
Tommy Fair
Cindy Conforte

Maureen Bruno
Sue Stannard
Tabitha Opie
Pete Bannon
Liberty Page
John O'Brien

The Jerome Harrison Grade 3 Chorus performed a medley of songs under the direction of Mrs. Judy Bannon and Mrs. Linda Humphrey.

Principal Robin Brown-Criscuolo stated that these children were very dedicated and committed, as they had to be at school at 8:00 a.m. one day each week.

Judy Bannon remarked that due to other commitments only one-half of the chorus was able to attend tonight's meeting and these children would also be performing at the Relay for Life in June.

Claudia Faughnan spoke on class sizes and number of para-professionals in Kindergarten classes in area towns. She mentioned that every school system she called employed para-professionals in their Kindergarten classrooms. Mrs. Faughnan remarked on what it means to be four and in Kindergarten. She asked the Board of Education to think about what they want for these children and to consider their needs very carefully. She mentioned that many educators consider Kindergarten the most important year of a child's education and sets the tone for the child's educational experience. (list attached)

II. Consent Agenda

a. Minutes

Minutes of the April 6, 2006 Board of Education meeting

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b. Resignations

The Superintendent has received a resignation from Ms. Meghan Fitzgibbons, special education teacher at TVES, effective at the end of the 2005/2006 school year.

c. Appointments

The Superintendent is recommending the appointment of Ms. Liberty Page to the position of science teacher at NBHS for the 2006/2007 school year to be paid at Masters, Step 3 as per the contract between the North Branford Federation of Teachers and the North Branford Board of Education.

d. Leaves – None at this time.

d. Field Trips – None at this time.

MOTION: Moved by Ron Haskins and seconded by Marcey Onofrio to approve the Consent Agenda as submitted.

CHAIRWOMAN SMITH:	AYE
VICE-CHAIR SYMANSKY:	AYE
SECRETARY ONOFRIO:	AYE
JOHN BOZZUTO, JR.:	AYE
ELISABETH CAPLAN:	AYE
RON HASKINS:	AYE

MOTION PASSED 6-0

Superintendent Wolfe introduced Ms. Liberty Page, newly hired science teacher, to the Board and everyone welcomed her to North Branford,

IV. Superintendent's Report

a. Recognition

The Board recognized TVES grade 5 student, Nicole Gilhuly, for her winning entry in the Connecticut Fire Prevention Poster contest. Nichole was one of 32 winners honored at an Award Presentation Lunch in March at the Cromwell Courtyard Marriot. Nicole's poster will appear on the 2007 Fire Prevention Poster Calendar.

Board Chairwoman Cheryl Smith presented Nicole with a certificate of achievement.

John O'Brien, fire marshal, stated Nicole's entry was picked from thousands of entries and this was a very big deal for North Branford. He congratulated Nicole.

b. Communications

Letter from Martha Meizies, Program Coordinator of the North Branford Senior Center
The letter thanks students and staff for facilitating the annual Senior Luncheon.

Memorandum from Commissioner of Education, Dr. Betty J. Sternberg, regarding a possible one-month delay in the results of the CAPT.

Letter from Attorney General Richard Blumenthal regarding MySpace.com.

Elisabeth Caplan stated she was very honored to have attended the luncheon for senior citizens at NBHS. She remarked that the food was fantastic and she and the seniors enjoyed seeing excerpts of the play Fiddler on the Roof. She mentioned that John Congo and Tom DiLella made it a very lively day.

Dr. Wolfe mentioned that there are over 70 million people on MySpace.com web-site.

Superintendent Wolfe distributed the K-12 Physical Education Curriculum to all Board members.

c. NBHS Principal Search

On Monday, May 8, the finalist for the position of Principal of NBHS held a number of forums at North Branford High School. In addition, an onsite visitation was scheduled for Friday, May 12th. The onsite visitation committee included three faculty members and three administrators.

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Superintendent Wolfe stated that the Board of Education at a Special Meeting on May 16, 2006 appointed Michele Saulis Principal of North Branford High School. The appointment is effective July 1, 2006. Michele is currently the Assistant Principal at Farmington High School. She formerly taught mathematics in West Hartford and Coventry. Prior to coming to Connecticut she taught in New York and worked as a researcher at the University of Pittsburgh.

Dr. Wolfe thanked the twelve members of the search committee stating there were four faculty members, three administrators, 2 parents, one student, Board Chair, and Superintendent Wolfe on the search committee

d. Summer of 2006

The Summer of 2006 – “*What do you collect?*” brochure was released for distribution in both North Branford and North Haven on March 1st. As of May 18, 1300 program registrations have been received. Approximately 70% of the registrations are from North Branford and 30% from North Haven. Many of the camps are already sold out with one of the most popular being Laser Tag.

e. Prep Time Grievance

The Board of Education has received a decision in the grievance between the North Branford Federation of teachers and the Board regarding elementary school prep time. The arbitrator ruled that prep time was not guaranteed in the contract and the grievance was denied.

Superintendent Wolfe distributed copies of the arbitration award to Board members.

e. Teacher of the Year 2007

The Superintendent announced the committee’s selection for the 2006/2007 Teacher of the Year.

Dr. Wolfe mentioned that Carter Welch, NBHS, was the District 2006-2007 Teacher of the Year and he congratulated him on this high honor. Dr. Wolfe also extended his congratulations to Lisa Flannery (JHS & STW) building Teacher of the Year, Joseph Daley, (TVES building Teacher of the Year and Roberta Mack (NBIS building Teacher of the Year.

f. District Retirement Dinner

The fifth annual North Branford Public School Retirement Dinner will be held on Wednesday, June 7th at the Country House in East Haven. Invitations have been sent to current and retired employees. The event is also open to the public. Reservations may be made by sending \$45 payable to the NB Retirement Dinner c/o Central Office.

g. Grants

SAGE

The Superintendent was pleased to learn that Project SAGE has been extended for one year by the State of Connecticut. The grant provides for school adjustment support for students in kindergarten through grade 3 at Jerome Harrison and Stanley T. Williams Schools. While funding is based on a competitive grant application, North Branford has been successful in obtaining funding in the past for this program. A copy of the SAGE Grant Application had been distributed to Board Members.

MOTION: Moved by Bonnie Symansky and seconded by Elisabeth Caplan to approve the SAGE Grant Application for the 2006/2007 school year.

CHAIRWOMAN SMITH:	AYE
VICE-CHAIR SYMANSKY:	AYE
SECRETARY ONOFRION:	AYE
JOHN BOZZUTO, JR.:	AYE
ELISABETH CAPLAN:	AYE
RON HASKINS:	AYE

MOTION PASSED 6-0

CARL PERKINS GRANT

The North Branford Public Schools will also again be applying for the Carl D. Perkins Grant. The purpose of this grant is to assist in the development and enhancement of the academic, career and technical skills of secondary students who elect to enroll in a career and technical education program. A copy of this grant had been distributed to Board Members.

MOTION: Moved by Marcey Onofrio and seconded by Bonnie Symansky to approve the Carl D. Perkins Grant Application for the 2006/2007 school year.

CHAIRWOMAN SMITH:	AYE
VICE-CHAIR SYMANSKY:	AYE
SECRETARY ONOFRIO:	AYE
JOHN BOZZUTO, JR.:	AYE
ELISABETH CAPLAN:	AYE
RON HASKINS:	AYE

MOTION PASSED 6-0

h. National Honor Society

The Superintendent was pleased to announce that 42 NBHS students were inducted into the National Honor Society on May 11, 2006.

Superintendent Wolfe remarked that he was very disappointed he could not attend this function as the Town Council Meeting was held the same night. Dr. Wolfe thanked Tamre Mockus and Dr. David Perry and mentioned that letters were sent to all honorees with his and the Board's congratulations.

i. Educational Reference Groups

Dr. Wolfe had distributed for Board review a copy of a memorandum from Dr. Betty Sternberg, Commissioner of Education, detailing the April 5th, 2006 State Board of Education action. The State Board eliminated the Education Reference Group designations and adopted the District Reference Group based upon 2000 Census Data. North Branford was previously in *ERG D* and now is in *DRG E*. There are 35 communities in *DRG E*.

Dr. Wolfe mentioned that he wrote a letter to the Commissioner of Education stating that he considered North Branford to be more suburban-rural than the towns in *DRG E* but his plea wasn't heard as North Branford will stay in *DRG E*. Dr. Wolfe mentioned that towns in *DRG D* do spend more dollars per student than North Branford does.

Cheryl Smith questioned if the changing of *DRG's* would hurt our funding.

Dr. Wolfe remarked that it shouldn't impact us.

Superintendent Wolfe mentioned that in five years North Branford went from the bottom of our *ERG* to the top being either second or third in the *ERG* of twenty-one towns.

Joan Follo mentioned that North Branford is still near the top for the CAPT and CMT's in DRG E.

k. K-5 Technology Benchmark Project

The K-5 Technology Benchmarks have now been completed. Joan Follo, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, was present to report to the Board information on this important project.

Joan Follo explained that the K-5 benchmarks were similar to the 6-8 benchmarks. Skills were identified and broken out per grade level. She thanked committee members Terri McCabe, Jim Dwyer, Joyce Hanchette, Laura Baldino, Michelle Cook, Judy Bannon and Patty Darragh.

Joan mentioned that the K-5 Technology Benchmarks were presented to the Curriculum sub-committee and one Board members had some questions. Mrs. Follo stated she would meet with Mrs. Symansky and go over the areas that are questionable.

Mrs. Symansky stated that it was a very impressive document but she felt that there were a few areas that needed to be tweaked.

Joan Follo remarked she would be very happy to hear what Mrs. Symansky had to say as Mrs. Symansky's expertise is in this field.

l. 2006-2007 Budget

The Board of Education's approved budget request of 7.36% was reduced by the Town Council to 5.25%. This was below the 5.56% benchmark of fixed costs. This reduction amounts to a dollar decrease of \$523,000. Administration has been working on suggested areas for reduction. These reductions were shared with the Budget Subcommittee on May 9, 2006. The Budget Subcommittee was prepared to share its list of proposed reductions.

As a result of the Referendum, the final funding level was most likely set at the Council's May 11th meeting. The Superintendent reported on the results of that meeting and any further reductions that had to be made.

Dr. Wolfe mentioned that this was a difficult year with reevaluation for the town and 16% of the taxpayers voted that the budget was too high.

Dr. Wolfe remarked that the number one administrators' desire was for the new schedule at NBIS. He mentioned that three positions would be cut in the 2006-2007 budget. One first grade at JHS, .5 kindergarten at JHS and .5 kindergarten at STW and

one grade 3 at JHS. He also mentioned that if the numbers go up in grade 3 at JHS it would be possible for these new students to attend third grade at TVES as transportation would not be a problem. Kindergarten class sizes at STW would be 19,19,19 and 20 and at JHS 19, 20,20 and 20. Grade three at JHS would be four classes of 25 students. Dr. Wolfe remarked that retention is down this year.

Reductions:

\$244,533 with matching retirements and teacher turnover.

\$4,921 will be reduced for Summer School as North Branford had joined with North Haven for academic summer school.

\$11, 342 with NBHS Principal and secretary turnover.

\$6,766 in Worker's Compensation.

\$99,032 reduction in medical benefits.

\$24,050 transportation credit.

\$37,800 savings on outside tuition.

\$34,272 reduction .5 speech pathologist.

\$30,000 Curriculum Management Cycle.

\$10,000 Technology lease.

\$4,000 reduction in athletic supplies. Dr. Wolfe mentioned we couldn't take the cuts from stipends according to contract, police services, transportation, coaches and referees.

\$15, 000 building repairs. Dr. Wolfe remarked we have to hope we don't have a lot of major repairs.

\$33,681 building improvements. Carpet in the NBHS main office will not be replaced. Number is high because of asbestos abatement. Also a cut at TVES for locker replacement,

\$4,400 CABA dues.

Superintendent Wolfe remarked that he compared North Branford to other systems in ERG D and North Branford has over one million dollars less in funding than these other towns.

Dr. Wolfe stated we would have a number of hot spots such as the kindergarten classes, fourth and fifth grades and at TVES, eighth grade at NBIS and some classes at NBHS. He thanked the budget sub-committee and all administrators for all their work on the 2006-2007 budget. Dr. Wolfe stated the good news is that NBHS will have lower class sizes, NBIS will have their new schedule, kindergarten will have two new aides, TVES will have a Library Media aide and JHS will gain an aide for remedial math.

Elisabeth Caplan stated she is concerned with the class sizes in kindergarten and asked if Dr. Wolfe would keep a close eye on these numbers.

Dr. Wolfe remarked that all numbers are monitored and he would give an update at the June Board meeting.

Bonnie Symansky questioned how much an aide costs.

Dr. Wolfe stated about \$14,000 to \$15,000.

Elisabeth Caplan stated if there was another retirement if another aide could be hired.

Dr. Wolfe stated he would keep an eye on all numbers and options.

Cheryl Smith questioned if we could look for another \$14,000 for another kindergarten aide at JHS.

Dr. Wolfe mentioned he could do whatever the Board requested.

Bonnie Symansky questioned if interns could be used in kindergarten classes.

Dr. Wolfe mentioned we would have five interns next years and we usually assigned them to the substitute rolls.

Dr. Wolfe remarked that we should wait until June to see what the numbers are or the Board could make a motion now.

Cheryl Smith stated we should wait until June.

MOTION: Moved by Elisabeth Caplan and seconded by Marcey Onofrio to approve the 2006-2007 budget as revised.

CHAIRWOMAN SMITH:	AYE
VICE-CHAIR SYMANSKY:	AYE
SECRETARY ONOFRIO:	AYE
JOHN BOZZUTO, JR.:	AYE
ELISABETH CAPLAN:	AYE
Ron Haskins:	AYE

MOTION PASSED 6-0

Elisabeth Caplan asked if Dr. Wolfe could keep the Board advised of the numbers in the Kindergarten classes.

Dr. Wolfe stated they would get a weekly report.

IV. Committee Reports

- a. **Negotiations** – Cheryl Smith stated the committee met with representatives of the Teacher’s union and they are moving forward.
- b. **Budget-** Cheryl Smith stated that there was a copy of the May 1 Financial statement and the same items are still in the red.
- c. **Buildings & Grounds-** John Bozzuto reported that the committee met on on May 17th and they are recommending that Frey Scientific is awarded the bid for the Science Lab.

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MOTION: Moved by Ron Haskins and seconded by John Bozzuto to award the bid for Science Labs-North Branford High School, number 01-2006, to Frey Scientific based upon total price and a completion time of 65 days, in the amount of \$32,873.00

CHAIRWOMAN SMITH:	AYE
VICE-CHAIR SYMANSKY:	AYE
SECRETARY ONOFRIO:	AYE
JOHN BOZZUTO, JR.:	AYE
ELISABETH CAPLAN:	AYE
RON HASKINS:	AYE

MOTION PASSED 6-0

John Bozzuto also mentioned the fascia board at STW was discussed and the updated price is \$11,232. This project has not gone out to bid as the Board has to make a decision.

He remarked that the new damages to the gymnasium floor at TVES caused by a roof leak would be from \$60,000 to \$70,000. He mentioned that it must be decided if we will go with a wood floor or use the same gym floor that is at JHS. John remarked that the source of the leak has been determined and this problem must be rectified before a new gym floor is installed.

Bonnie Symansky questioned how many student-scientists the new Lab would accommodate.

John Bozzuto stated there would be 14 stations for 28 students.

Donald Winnicki stated it was one Lab that had the Bunsen burners and sinks (the wet and the gas) around the perimeter of the room and the students' desk in the middle of the room. The teacher's station will be a full Lab station.

Mrs. Symansky remarked she was glad the Board was going with a Scientific Company for the Lab.

d. Curriculum- Bonnie Symansky mentioned that North Branford was selected for a National Science Foundation Grant. This grant would be used for teaching teachers to be science coaches.

Joan Follo stated that North Branford was selected by the state to participate in this grant if the state receives the grant

Mrs. Symansky stated that Richard Terrill presented the Business Curriculum for NBIS and NBHS. She remarked that it is very comprehensive and the committee did a great job and she was very impressed.

- e. **Pension** – Elisabeth Caplan stated that one pension was discussed and the committee would be meeting with an actuary in August.

- f. **Policy**

The Board of Education received copies of the following policies for first reading:

Policy #P9400	Board Member Orientation
Policy #P9410	Board Member Development Opportunities
Policy #P9420	Board Member Compensation and Expenses
Policy #P9430	Insurance Coverage

The Board of Education received copies of following “tabled” policies for second reading and approval:

Policy #P9110	Meeting Conduct
Policy #P9115	Board Meetings – Public Participation
Policy #P9120	Actions by the Board

MOTION: Moved by Ron Haskins and seconded by Bonnie Symansky to approve Policy #P9110 –Meeting Conduct as submitted.

CHAIRWOMAN SMITH:	AYE
VICE-CHAIR SYMANSKY:	AYE
SECRETARY ONOFRIO:	AYE
JOHN BOZZUTTO, JR.:	AYE
ELISABETH CAPLAN:	AYE
RON HASKINS:	AYE

MOTION PASSED 6-0

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MOTION: Moved by Ron Haskins and seconded by Bonnie Symansky to approve Policy #9115 – Board Meetings-Public Participation as submitted.

CHAIRWOMAN SMITH: AYE
VICE-CHAIR SYMANSKY: AYE
SECRETARY ONOFRIO: AYE
JOHN BOZZUTO, JR.: AYE
ELISABETH CAPLAN: AYE
RON HASKINS: AYE

MOTION PASSED 6-0

MOTION: Moved by Ron Haskins and seconded by Bonnie Symansky to approve Policy # P9120 – Actions by the Board as submitted.

CHAIRWOMAN SMITH: AYE
VICE-CHAIR SYMANSKY: AYE
SECRETARY ONOFRIO: AYE
JOHN BOZZUTO, JR.: AYE
ELISABETH CAPLAN: AYE
RON HASKINS: AYE

MOTION PASSED 6-0

g. ACES – Cheryl Smith reported that ACES is advertising for a new Assistant Director and Director of Fiscal Operations. She stated that the CAPT's and a proposal for a cell tower at Wintergreen School were discussed. Mrs. Smith mentioned that the spending freeze worked out well as ACES now has a \$300,000 surplus. They approved several budgets including the day care budget.

h. Strategic Planning - Dr. Wolfe stated there would be a Strategic Planning meeting on June 26, 2006 for an administrator's update.

i. Building Committee – Dr. Wolfe mentioned that four finalists for Construction Manager were interviewed today. He thanked Alan Davis and NBIS staff for two and one-half days of focus group meetings with the architects.

j. Calendar Committee

The Calendar Committee met and provided a copy of a sample calendar for the 2007/2008 school year.

MOTION: Moved by Ron Haskins and seconded by Marcey Onofrio to approve the calendar for the 2007-2008 school year as submitted.

CHAIRWOMAN SMITH:	AYE
VICE-CHAIR SYMANSKY:	AYE
SECRETARY ONOFRIO:	AYE
JOHN BOZZUTO, JR.:	AYE
ELISABETH CAPLAN:	AYE
RON HASKINS:	AYE

MOTION PASSED 6-0

Marcey Onofrio stated that the calendar committee hoped that the early start and early end does not create an issue with the NBIS construction schedule. She also mentioned that the NBIS request for Professional Development to coincide with the NELMS conference was considered but with Good Friday being a week earlier made this problematic.

Elisabeth Caplan questioned what the adjustment of the school calendar meant.

Marcey Onofrio remarked that school would end on June 11, 2008 but if there were more than seven-snow days these days would come off the April vacation. The school year would not go beyond June 20, 2008

k. Transportation/Bus Safety Committee – No report at this time.

l. Communication – Bonnie Symansky stated that she met with Anita Ward at NBHS. The committee questioned why the educational channel was down and was told that if they play a regular video tape it shuts the whole system down. The wires need repair and we need to make sure the equipment is wired properly. Mrs. Symansky stated there were three very old cameras that the educational channel uses and one is broken.

VI. New Business

No new business at this time.

VII. Visitors and Press

A parent questioned the noise and dust level when NBIS is renovated with students in the building.

Dr. Wolfe stated that is one of the reasons a Construction Manager was being hired instead of a Clerk of the Works. The Construction Manager will insure the safety and health of everyone in the building. Safety will be our utmost priority and there will be a web-site that parents can refer to too see what is going on with the building.

Claudia Faughnan thanked the Board for their concern with class sizes.

Cliff Potter questioned if the work at NBIS could be done after hours when the students are gone.

Dr. Wolfe stated some of the work would be done at night.

John Bozzuto remarked that the Building Committee could see if this is an option and what the cost would be.

Cliff Potter stated when he worked on this type of job the workers were told before they were hired that all work would be done from three to eleven. Overtime was not paid for regular hired hours.

John Bozzuto stated the committee would research the matter and mentioned many jobs would be done after school. (blasting, jack hammering, etc.)

Cliff Potter also thanked the Board for not adopting a policy to limit visitor comments to two minutes. He remarked that most people will respect the gavel and he was glad to see the Board agreed not to set time limits.

VIII. THE NEXT REGUALR BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING IS SCHEDULED JUNE 8, 2006 AT TOTOKET VALLEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.

IX. Adjournment

MOTION: Moved by Marcey Onofrio and seconded by John Bozzuto to adjourn this Board of Education meeting at 8:51 p.m.

ALL VOTED AYE

Respectfully submitted,

Sherry Ardine
Account Clerk