

**North Branford Board of Education Meeting
June 8, 2006**

The North Branford Board of Education meeting was called to order at 6:10 p.m. in the Conference Room of Totoket Valley Elementary School on Thursday June 8, 2006. The following members attended:

Board Chairwoman:	Cheryl Smith
Board Vice-Chairwoman:	Bonnie Symansky
Board Secretary:	Marcey Onofrio
Board Members:	Elisabeth Caplan Ron Haskins

Superintendent of Schools: Dr. Robert K. Wolfe

Absent: John Bozzuto, Jr.

MOTION: Moved by Bonnie Symansky and seconded by Ron Haskins 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, legal matters and negotiations.

ALL VOTED AYE

MOTION: Moved by Ron Haskins and seconded by Elisabeth Caplan to reconvene to the 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:	Joan Follo
Principals:	Dr. David Perry, NBHS Alan Davis, NBIS Robin Brown, JHS Dr. Karen Johnson, STW

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Danielle Gaudioso
Mary-Ellen DiLella
Nikki Shea
Karolin Regan
R. L. Johnson
Deanna D'Agostino
Sanjiv Chaturvedi

Carol Brearton
Meghen FitzGibbons
Tracy Bureau
Melissa LeBlanc
D. DaCunto
Deborah Welton

Linda Lyon
Pam Kendrick
Jen Daddio
Phil Palma, NBFT
Donna Ricci
Susan Calamita

Susan Calamita presented a letter from parents and students enrolled at JHS requesting the reinstatement of the third grade teaching position at JHS that was recently eliminated. She read the entire letter to the Board of Education and submitted a petition. (attached)

Jen Daddio remarked that she has a student at JHS and she is concerned with the numbers in the third grade class for next year. She asked if the fire code allows for twenty-fives desks in one room. She stated she felt there was only room for twenty or twenty-one student desks.

Pam Kendrick remarked that she also had a student at JHS and she was a teacher in another district. She mentioned that she felt there was not enough room for twenty-five students in the rooms at JHS. She stated that the Board of Education is concerned about math scores and hired a consultant. It is her opinion that more money spent on teachers will higher the math scores and not by hiring consultants. She felt that asking a teacher to go from kindergarten to fourth grade was a big jump and this teacher might not be qualified to teach fourth grade. She also questioned if the Board has looked at bumping teachers by seniority, internally.

Sanjiv Chaturvedi had three comments about education in North Branford. One, was what happens to students at NBHS who choose not to attend college? He feels there are no courses for them at NBHS and they are being short-changed. Two, our teachers are stretched way too thin. We ask them to teach, be mental health counselors, hall monitors, social workers, etc. He mentioned the Board should hire more social workers and psychologists and let teachers teach. Three, police officers could be assigned to NBHS and build a relationship with these students and decrease a burden on the teachers.

Tracy Bureau mentioned she has a daughter at JHS and she is concerned with the teacher cuts in second and third grades next year. She mentioned that this second grade is a difficult group of students who need more guidance. She also questioned the cut in teachers but a higher salary for administrators.

Another parent questioned the large class sizes for third grade at JHS next year stating it would be hard for the students to learn and overwhelming for teachers.

Nikki Shea stated the classrooms at JHS are not large enough to accommodate twenty-five students. She mentioned she was very disappointed that the Board of Education allowed a qualified kindergarten teacher at JHS to be moved to fourth grade at TVES that the teacher is not comfortable with. She mentioned she would now have to home school her child after he gets home from school.

Deanna D'Agostino stated that in her child's classroom this year eleven of twenty-two students needed extra help.

Another parent states that she feels education in North Branford is being sacrificed and all speakers tonight has touched on what she feels.

Susan Calamita questioned what the next step is for parents to keep JHS staff the same as it is this year.

Cheryl Smith remarked that the Board of Education has to deal with a \$560,000 cut and this is a tough year for everyone. She stated that the Board is watching all class sizes. She remarked that no second grade was cut at JHS. She mentioned that the third grade is not the only hot spot in our school system. She remarked that if more students are enrolled in the third grade at JHS they would be bused to TVES, as she knows twenty-five students is a large class size but money is also an issue.

A parent questioned if the Board of Education has looked at hiring more aides.

Cheryl Smith stated that the Board of Education is looking at everything and again, money is an issue.

Elisabeth Caplan urged all concerned parents to write to Town Council members and their representatives stating their concerns and let their voices be heard. She remarked that the Board of Education listens to all concerns and all our teachers work hard and not just the teachers at JHS. She mentioned that the Board is doing the best they can with the money they have and all concerns are heard.

A parents stated that her child at NBHS has four classes on an A day and only one class on a B day. She remarked that she is very concerned with the Block Scheduling for NBHS next year and if the Board plans to add more teachers at NBHS.

Dr. Perry stated that NBHS is in the process of hand scheduling right now for the next school year and they are trying to rectify all schedules for NBHS students.

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II. Student Representative

Danielle Gaudio reported on the following:

Student Council: New class officers were recently elected for each grade for the 2006-2007 school year. The food drive has come to a close and Mr. Dauster's homeroom was the primary contributor.

FBLA: The Senior Breakfast was held on May 25, 2006. Heather Petrucci and Christina Delcos received FBLA scholarships. Laura Just, NBHS graduated and former FBLA member requested help from North Branford FBLA students with a pasta dinner with the intent to raise money for an orphanage in South Africa.

Honor Society: Mrs. Mockus and the 2006 officers conducted the induction ceremony for the class of 2007. Dr. Perry was a surprised inductee at the event and received a plaque for all his accomplishments. With the new honor society in place their focus is to set up and aid in the graduation of the senior class of 2006.

Sports:

Baseball: 12- 11 – The baseball team made it to the quarterfinals.

Softball: Excellent season with the team making it to the quarterfinals.

Boys' Tennis: 14-5 - John Maxson and Pete Angeoli won the doubles shoreline tournament and received shoreline mention with Jason Simonsen, Bryan Panico and Pat McCarthy.

Track: Boys finished third overall at the shoreline conference.
Girls 7-3-1

The class of 2006 will graduate on June 21, 2006 and on behalf of the senior class Danielle thanked all Board of Education members, teachers, administrators, and parents for all their help and support throughout their school years.

III. Approval of Consent Agenda

a. Minutes

Minutes of the May 16, 2006 Special Board of Education meeting.

Minutes of the May 18, 2006 Board of Education meeting.

b. Resignations

The Superintendent has received a retirement resignation from Mr. Joseph Wisniewski, math teacher at NBHS. Mr. Wisniewski is retiring from the North Branford Public Schools after 36 years of dedicated service.

The Superintendent has received a resignation from Mrs. Donna LaFata, science teacher at North Branford High School.

c. Appointments

d. Leaves – None at this time.

e. Field Trips – None at this time.

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

Elisabeth Caplan had one correction:

Page 10:
Should read Elisabeth Caplan not Marcey Caplan

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

CHAIRWOMAN SMITH:	AYE
VICE-CHAIRWOMAN SYMANSKY:	AYE
SECRETARY ONOFRIO:	AYE
ELISABETH CAPLAN:	AYE
RON HASKINS:	AYE
MOTION PASSED 5-0	

Dr. Wolfe mentioned that he wishes both Joseph Wisniewski and Donna LaFata to be exceptional educators and wish them both the best of luck in their future endeavors.

IV. Superintendent's Report

a. Recognition

The *Above & Beyond* Award is an award presented by the Board of Education and is the highest employee service award. The award recognizes service to the school or community by employees who have clearly distinguished themselves by the scope and nature of their contribution. The Superintendent recommends an individual to the Board who has clearly gone "*above & beyond.*" Over the past five years 13 individuals have received this award.

Superintendent Wolfe stated that the fourteenth winner of this Award goes to Meghan FitzGibbons. Meghan has volunteered with Habitat for Humanity in Florida, Alaska and Costa Rica. She will be traveling to Africa this summer for Habitat for Humanity. Ms. FitzGibbons also volunteers for Hospice in Middletown.

Chairwoman Smith presented Meghan with the Above and Beyond Award and a small reception was held in Meghan's honor.

b. Communications

The Superintendent received a photograph from our Armed Forces in Iraq. The photo shows military personnel distributing Beanie Babies to children in Iraq. North Branford recently sent care packages to military personnel in Iraq. The care packages included, Kool-Aid, Slim Jims, letters and Beanie Babies.

c. Authority to Hire

Given the critical market conditions, it is important that the Superintendent move quickly to hire high-quality candidates for the remaining open positions. The Board has traditionally given the Superintendent permission to hire during the summer and report to the Board at its next scheduled meeting on employee hiring.

MOTION: Moved by Elisabeth Caplan and seconded by Ron Haskins to approve that authority be granted to the Superintendent to hire certified personnel during the summer of 2006.

CHAIRWOMAN SMITH:	AYE
VICE-CHAIRWOMAN SYMANKSY:	AYE
SECRETARY ONOFRIO:	AYE
ELISABETH CAPLAN:	AYE
RON HASKINS:	AYE
MOTION PASSED 5-0	

d. Post High School Plans

The Superintendent provided the Board with an up-to-the-minute report on Post High School Plans. The report detailed the number of students going on to higher education, military service and the work force.

Dr. Wolfe mentioned that a number of students would attend very competitive schools. (attached)

e. New Teacher Appreciation Luncheon & Survey

On Friday, May 26th, Director of Curriculum, Joan Follo, choreographed a New Teacher Appreciation Luncheon. Discussion regarding the results of the survey on levels of support was held over a luncheon in the Corner Café. North Branford High School students in our culinary program prepared the lunch.

Joan Follo stated that the new teachers were quite happy with several areas of the teacher support system but there were also some areas that had to be improved on and hopes these issues would be addressed next year.

Cheryl Smith questioned what areas should be improved on.

Joan Follo remarked that new teachers would like more mentors in their subject area, more guidance on classroom management and more in-service.

Joan Follo mentioned Sheila Roberti, TVES as being an excellent mentor and many new teachers went to her for guidance.

Elisabeth Caplan questioned that when scores come back to new teachers from the Best Program if they make recommendations to help new teachers if they are having trouble in a certain area.

Joan Follo stated she would get this information.

Dr. Wolfe mentioned that Dr. Karen Johnson and Mrs. Brittingham met several times throughout the year with the new teachers.

f. Kindergarten Enrollment

Kindergarten enrollment is closely being monitored. At the time of this writing, 84 students have registered for Jerome Harrison and 71 students at Stanley T. Williams. Based on the increased enrollment at Jerome, the Superintendent recommends the hiring of a .5 kindergarten teacher for Jerome Harrison School. The Superintendent detailed the funding source for this position.

MOTION: Moved by Elisabeth Caplan and seconded by Marcey Onofrio to approve the hiring of a .5 kindergarten teacher for Jerome Harrison School for the 2006/2007 school year.

CHAIRWOMAN SMITH:	AYE
VICE-CHAIRWOMAN SYMANSKY:	AYE
SECRETARY ONOFRIO:	AYE
ELISABETH CAPLAN:	AYE
RON HASKINS:	AYE
MOTION PASSED 5-0	

g. Occupational Therapy Collaboration

The Superintendent previously reported to the Board that in the 06/07 school year there was a decrease in occupational therapy costs because it was anticipated that the school system would move from contracted services to the hiring of a part time employee. Conversation is underway to create a collaborative venture with North Haven to share services. The net result will be more services for less cost. The Superintendent provided additional information at the Board meeting regarding this part time position.

MOTION: Moved by Bonnie Symansky and seconded by Elisabeth Caplan to hire an occupational therapist and enter into a collaborative relationship with the North Haven Public Schools to share this position.

CHAIRWOMAN SMITH:	AYE
VICE CHAIRWOMAN SYMANSKY:	AYE
SECRETARY ONOFRIO:	AYE
ELISABETH CAPLAN:	AYE
RON HASKINS:	AYE
MOTION PASSED 5-0	

Cheryl Smith questioned how much Occupational Therapy time we would need.

Dr. Wolfe stated he would know in about one week. He remarked that between North Haven and North Branford this would probably not be a full time position. He mentioned that North Branford would probably need four-tenths of this position.

h. Certified Evaluations

In accordance with Section 10-151b of the Connecticut General Statutes the Superintendent shall report the status of teacher evaluations to the local or regional Board of Education. For purposes of this section, the term teacher shall include each professional employee of a Board of Education below the rank of Superintendent who holds a certificate or permit issued by the State Board of Education.

The Superintendent informed the Board that year-end summative evaluations on all certified employees are currently in progress. This process includes a year-end conference and a review of all supportive material related to the goals or mutual expectations that have been established. It is expected that this will be completed on or about June 30th, 2006.

i. Strategic Planning Update

The administrative team will meet on Monday, June 26th, for a goal review and also to identify target goals for the 06/07 school year. Once suggested goals for the 06/07 school year have been identified, the information will be shared with the Board of Education. Traditionally, the Board adopts its goals in August.

Dr. Wolfe mentioned that the newly hired principal of NBHS, Michele Saulis would be joining this meeting. Dr. Wolfe remarked that the Board of Education is required by law to establish goals and for the last five years the Board's goals come from Strategic Planning.

j. Maintenance of Effort

The Superintendent has received notification that the State Dept. of Education has approved its IDEA Grant for 2006-2007 and the rationale provided as to why the Maintenance of Effort had decreased. The State Department had been informed that cost effective programming and the creation of our own in-house programs reduced our costs. A detailed report was filed with the State Department substantiating our Maintenance of Effort.

Dr. Wolfe remarked that this grant virtually funds the special education department one-Hundred per-cent and is worth \$400,000. Superintendent Wolfe thanked Suzanne Wright, Special Education Director, her staff and Donald Winnicki, Director of Business/Personnel for their efforts in applying the data to submit to the state.

k. Educational Technology Plan

Enclosed for Board review was a copy of the North Branford Board of Education – Educational Technology Plan for the Period July 1, 2006 through June 30, 2009. The plan was originally submitted to ACES as required by the State. It is now submitted to the Board of Education for approval prior to final submission to the State.

MOTION: Moved by Elisabeth Caplan and seconded by Marcey Onofrio to accept the North Branford Board of Education – Educational Technology Plan for the Period July 1, 2006 through June 30, 2009 as submitted.

CHAIRWOMAN SMITH:	AYE
VICE-CHAIRWOMAN SYMANSKY:	AYE
SECRETARY ONOFRIO:	AYE
ELISABETH CAPLAN:	AYE
RON HASKINS:	AYE
MOTION PASSED 5-0	

Cheryl Smith questioned why our Technology Plan has to be first sent to an area representative.

Dr. Wolfe mentioned that is what the state required as ACES is somewhat like a screening ground for the state. He remarked that in the near future the state might not require all school systems to have a Technology Plan.

Dr. Wolfe thanked Tim Hartigan, Bruce Williams and the Technology staff for all their efforts.

Bonnie Symansky requested that on page 9 of the Technology Plan that Anita Wards' title be changed from Librarian to Library Media Specialist.

V. Committee Reports

a. Negotiations

Discuss and take action on unaffiliated contracts.

1. Director of Personnel & Business – Don Winnicki

MOTION: Moved by Ron Haskins and seconded by Elisabeth Caplan to extend the contract of the Director of Personnel and Business, Donald Winnicki, one additional year, making a three-year Contract commencing July 1, 2006 and ending June 30, 2009.

CHAIRWOMAN SMITH: AYE
VICE-CHAIRWOMAN SYMANSKY: AYE
SECRETARY ONOFRIO: AYE
ELISABETH CAPLAN: AYE
RON HASKINS: AYE
MOTION PASSED 5-0

Cheryl Smith remarked that Donald Winnicki does an excellent job at managing the budget.

2. Superintendent of Schools – Dr. Robert K. Wolfe

MOTION: Moved by Ron Haskins and seconded by Elisabeth Caplan to extend the Superintendent's contract one additional year, making a three-year contract commencing July 1, 2006 and ending June 30, 2009 and increasing the Superintendent's salary by 3.8 % for fiscal year 2006-2007.

CHAIRWOMAN SMITH: AYE
VICE-CHAIRWOMAN SYMANSKY: AYE
SECRETARY ONOFRIO: AYE
ELISABETH CAPLAN: AYE
RON HASKINS: AYE
MOTION PASSED 5-0

Cheryl Smith remarked that Dr. Wolfe met a lot of his goals and thanked him for staying focused on pupil admissions.

Cheryl Smith stated that meetings are ongoing with the Teachers' Union and agreed upon five days for evening meetings for teaches.. The plan would be worked out before the beginning of the 2006-2007 school year. Mrs. Smith stated Dr. Wolfe and the union representative accomplished this agreement before the meeting. It is agreed that the language for personal days will stay as it is and the Board will continue to look at the issues concerning teacher assignments. Cheryl Smith stated there would no be a formal meeting in July but she would stay in communications with Phil Palma.

b. Budget

A copy of the June 1 Financial Statement was provided for Board review.

Cheryl Smith stated the budget is over in certified salaries and classified salaries due to medical leaves of various staff members.

Elisabeth Caplan stated the budget could have been a lot worse with the rising cost of energy.

c. Buildings & Grounds

There was no meeting at this time

c. Curriculum

Bonnie Symansky reported that she met tonight with the curriculum committee and Jen Marena presented the World Language Curriculum stating there would be new textbooks for Spanish and Italian 6-12. This is a 6-12 curriculum but plans are being studied to move World Languages into the lower grades in the future. Mrs. Symansky mentioned that there is not a lot of interest in French. She also stated that the committee discussed block scheduling. She feels the teachers are getting more comfortable with block scheduling.

Elisabeth Caplan stated the committee also met with Barbara Soch and John Congo of the music department and they presented their curriculum. She noted that Barbara Soch feels the new music curriculum will be more in alignment with state and national standards.

Joan Follo mentioned that all Board members received curriculums for music, business and world language.

Bonnie Symansky mentioned that she is very impressed with the whole curriculum cycle.

Cheryl Smith remarked about grade 2 curriculum and the North Branford Historical Society. She mentioned that the Society is trying to decide to continue curriculum or revise curriculum with the Little Red Schoolhouse and the Reynold Beers House.

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Elisabeth Caplan stated it was more from a lack of volunteers and the attention span of second graders. She stated we would have to coordinate our efforts in a different way to make the program more hands on.

d. Pension

No meeting at this time.

f. Policy

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

Policy #P9160	Vote Recording
Policy #P9310	Board – Public Communications
Policy #P9320	Meetings – Electronic Mail Communications

The Board of Education received a copy of the following policies for second reading and approval:

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

MOTION: Moved by Ron Haskins and seconded by Marcey Onofrio to approve Policy #P9400 – Board Member Orientation as submitted.

CHAIRWOMAN SMITH:	AYE
VICE-CHAIRWOMAN SYMANSKY:	AYE
SECRETARY ONOFRIO:	AYE
ELISABETH CAPLAN:	AYE
RON HASKINS:	AYE
MOTION PASSED 5-0	

MOTION: Moved by Ron Haskins and seconded by Elisabeth Caplan to approve Policy #9410 Board Member Development Opportunities as submitted.

CHAIRWOMAN SMITH: AYE
VICE-CHAIRWOMAN SYMANSKY: AYE
SECRETARY ONOFRIO: AYE
ELISABETH CAPLAN: AYE
RON HASKINS: AYE
MOTION PASSED 5-0

MOTION: Moved by Ron Haskins and seconded by Elisabeth Caplan to approve Policy #9420 - Board Member Compensation and Expenses as submitted.

CHAIRWOMAN SMITH: AYE
VICE-CHAIRWOMAN SYMANSKY: AYE
SECRETARY ONOFRIO: AYE
ELISABETH CAPLAN: AYE
RON HASKINS: AYE
MOTION PASSED 5-0

MOTION: Moved by Ron Haskins and seconded by Elisabeth Caplan to approve Policy #9430 – Insurance Coverage as submitted.

CHAIRWOMAN SMITH: AYE
VICE-CHAIRWOMAN SYMANSKY: AYE
SECRETARY ONOFRIO: AYE
ELISABETH CAPLAN: AYE
RON HASKINS: AYE
MOTION PASSED 5-0

g. ACES

Cheryl Smith stated there was a meeting and she was unable to attend.

h. Strategic Planning

Strategic Planning already covered.

i. Building Committee

Dr. Wolfe stated that the Town Manager, architect, construction manager and Haz Mat contractor met today. There is considerable Haz Mat material that must be removed from NBIS with most of it being floor tile or encapsulated in the heating system. The earliest Haz Mat could begin work would be July 15, 2006. This would be only a three - week period to do the work before we need to get into the building to clean it for the upcoming school year. Instead of disrupting the school for an entire year to gain a couple of weeks it was a mutual decision by all parties not to start the work until the day school is out next year. Haz Mat would go to bid in January 2007.

j. Calendar Committee

There was no meeting to report on at this time.

k. Transportation/Bus Safety Committee

Ron Haskins stated that there was a Transportation Hearing with parents with concerns on a placement of a bus stop.

It was decided to uphold the Board of Education's policy of not taking a bus down a cul-de-sac.

k. Communication

Bonnie Symansky reported that Tim Hartigan had a meeting at NBHS with R&B concerning the cable access channel and is waiting for a report.

VI. New Business

There was no new business at this time.

VII. Visitors and Press

There were no further comments at this time.

XIII. The next regular Board of Education meeting is scheduled for July 20, 2006 at Totoket Valley Elementary School.

XIV. Adjournment

MOTION: Moved by Marcey Onofrio and seconded by Elisabeth Caplan to adjourn this meeting of the North Branford Board of Education at 8:32 p.m.

ALL VOTED AYE

Respectfully submitted,

Sherry Ardine
Account Clerk